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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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Bomb blasts in Manipur on 3rd anniv of conflict

IMPHAL, 3 MAY

Suspected militants triggered a bomb explosion in Imphal West district near the Imphal airport on Sunday, the third anniversary of ethnic conflict between Meitei and Kuki communities in the state, officials said. No casualty or damage to property was reported in the blast that occurred near a crematorium. The incident site is also close to a camp of the Territorial Army. The violence between the Meitei and Kuki communities started on 3 May, 2023 over the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribes status. Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's population and live mostly in the Valley, while tribals, which include Nagas and Kukis, constitute 40 per cent and reside mainly in the hill districts.—*PTI*

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Centre says don't worry about AI's water usage

THANE, 3 MAY

Amid concerns from environmentalist that India's growing AI and cloud sectors could consume nearly 37.5 billion litres of water annually, the Centre said the industry is adopting cooling technologies to minimise usage. The estimate, by NatConnect Foundation, equates to the annual needs of 7–8 lakh people. Director B N Kumar warned the expansion could threaten water security in a letter to the Prime Minister's Office. Data centre capacity has risen from 375 MW in 2020 to over 1,500 MW in 2025, said Shambhu Nath Gupta of the Ministry of Jal Shakti. "Data centres are adopting advanced cooling systems," he said. The Ministry added efforts such as rainwater harvesting and wastewater reuse are also underway.—*PTI*

9 dead as suspected AC blast burns down Delhi building

Rescuers find dead mom, son holding each other

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

A fire ripped through a residential building in east Delhi's Vivek Vihar early on Sunday, killing nine people including a toddler from two families, officials said.

The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained, but reports suggested that several air-conditioners were installed in the house on the second floor, and an AC blast may have triggered the fire.

The incident was reported at 3.48 am at a four-storey building in Vivek Vihar Phase-I, following which police, fire and disaster management teams rushed to the spot.

The blaze engulfed flats on the second, third and fourth floors of the building, prompting frantic rescue efforts.

With a centrally locked door system, the occupants found it difficult to escape.

Twelve fire tenders were pressed into service, while teams from the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), traffic police and local police assisted in rescue.

The Delhi Fire Service (DFS) said nine charred bodies were recovered from the building.

Those killed on the third floor were Arvind Jain, 60, his wife Anita Jain, 58, their son Nishant Jain, 35, daughter-in-law Anchal Jain, 33, and grandchild Akash Jain.

On the fourth floor, Nitin Jain, 50, his wife Shailey Jain, 48, and their son Samyak Jain, 25, were found dead.

"They could not get out. The bodies of the mother and son were found holding each other on the staircase leading to the roof. The sight was devastating," Sanjeev Rana, member of a non-profit disaster management team, said.

On the second floor, Shikha Jain, 45, was found dead, while her husband Naveen Jain, 48, was injured.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over the loss and announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) would be given to the next of kin of each of those who lost their lives, and the injured would be given Rs 50,000. —*PTI*

Charred exterior of the four-storey residential building, in New Delhi on Sunday —*PTI*

People gather after a fire at a four-storey residential building at Vivek Vihar area, in New Delhi, killed at least nine people

WHAT TRAPPED PEOPLE IN INFERNO

Residents were trapped and unable to escape, when the fire broke out due to poor design.

SINGLE STAIRCASE: The building only had one internal escape route.

CENTRALLY LOCKED DOORS: With electricity cut, doors were difficult to open, and the lift unusable. Three people died on the top floor due to this.

IRON GRILLS: Residents were imprisoned as rescuers had to cut the grills at the rear side gate.

PEOPLE'S VERDICT

4 states, 1 UT tense as results come out today

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

Counting of votes will be held on Monday in Tamil Nadu, Assam, Kerala, Puducherry and West Bengal after a riveting high-voltage contest with the outcome crucial for prominent ruling regional parties like the TMC and DMK as well as the BJP, Congress and the Left.

The exercise in West Bengal will begin at 8 am across 77 centres for 293 assembly seats, starting with the postal ballots, at the counting centres, which will have a three-tier security system.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee-led TMC is hoping to win its fourth consecutive term by overcoming a spirited challenge from the main Opposition BJP, despite repolling in several stations.

The EC has deployed 165 additional counting observers and 77 police observers.

Meanwhil,e the BJP-led NDA is hoping for a hattrick in Assam. EVMs, holding the electoral fates of 722 hopefuls from 126 assembly constituencies of the state, will be opened at 40 counting centres across 35 districts.

In Kerala, buoyed by its performance in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and recent local body elections, the Congress-led UDF is hoping to oust the LDF. The NDA, although not in contention to form the government, views the election as crucial to expanding its footprint in Kerala.

Similarly, the ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu is hoping for a second consecutive term. Besides its main rival AIADMK, there were new entrants like actor-politician Vijay-led TVK's.

In Puducherry, the NDA hopes to hold the Union Territory, while bypoll results will be out for several states, including Karnataka. —*PTI*

>>>More on Pgs 2, 3, 5

West Bengal CM and TMC candidate from Bhabanipur constituency Mamata Banerjee flocked by supporters, in Kolkata —*PTI*

SRINGERI CONG MLA LOSES 255 VOTES IN RECOUNT

After reverification and recount of postal ballots in Sringeri, Congress MLA TD Raje Gowda's vote tally dropped by 255, officials said. He had won the 2023 Assembly election by 201 votes. The exercise, ordered by the Karnataka High Court, followed a challenge by BJP's DN Jeevaraj. Recount figures showed Gowda's postal votes falling to 314, while Jeevaraj's stood at 690. Results were not yet altered, and a report was sent to the Election Commission, an official. BJP leaders hailed the outcome, while DyCM alleged vote tampering and vowed to fight the matter legal. The 2023 counting agent has filed a police complaint.

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The MT Sarv Shakti is set for Visakhapatnam
—*MARINE TRAFFIC*

India-bound LPG tanker clears Hormuz

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

A tanker carrying liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) for India has sailed out of the Strait of Hormuz and is now headed towards the country, an official statement said on Sunday.

The Marshall Islands-flagged LPG carrier MT Sarv Shakti, loaded with 46,313 tonnes of LPG and staffed by 20 crew, including 18 Indians, cleared the key shipping chokepoint on 2 May and is expected to reach Visakhapatnam on 13 May, it said.

The cargo -- enough to meet half a day's requirement of the country -- will partly tide over supply constraints being faced since the start of the West Asia conflict.

Ship-tracking data showed its position in Oman Gulf on Sunday evening.

Sarv Shakti is the first India-linked tanker to cross the area since the US blockade of ships tied to Iran began, pushing transits through Hormuz back down to almost zero.

There are 14 Indian linked vessels still stranded on the west side of the Strait. —*PTI*

GOVT DISMISSES REPORTS ABOUT CHANGES TO AADHAAR

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

The Ministry of Electronics and IT has dismissed reports and social media posts claiming Aadhaar's design may change to just a photo and QR code by year-end. In a clarification on Sunday, the Ministry said no such changes were planned and that such reports were creating unnecessary confusion.

People were advised to ignore them and rely on official communication from UIDAI through its social media handles and PIB press releases. The ministry flagged that such reports have been circulating across media platforms and social media, creating confusion among citizens, saying, "There are intermittent news reports and social media posts explaining how Aadhaar's look may change by the end of this year to just a photo and a QR code, alone. This is not correct. There is no plan for any changes."

Aadhaar, launched in 2009, is a 12-digit biometric ID and the card includes the holder's name, photo, number and a QR code for secure, offline, digitally signed verification. —*News on Air*

K'taka MLC seeks suspension of 7 sugar mills

BENGALURU, 3 MAY

Congress MLC Dinesh Gooligowda has urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to take strict legal action against seven private sugar factories in South Karnataka for allegedly violating government orders and withholding incentive payments to sugarcane farmers for the 2025–26 crushing season.

In a representation to Siddaramaiah and other officials, he said the State government had announced an additional incentive of Rs 100 per tonne of sugarcane to safeguard farmers' interests.

While 73 of 81 sugar factories, largely in North Karnataka, have complied and are making payments, seven factories in Mandya, Mysuru, Hassan and Chamarajanagar have challenged the order in court and delayed dues, he stated.

He alleged the factories were refusing to provide farmers' bank account details, preventing the government from directly transferring its share, and were not cooperating with district administrations despite repeated directions.

Gooligowda called for cancellation of licences Bannari Amman Sugars; Chamundeshwari Sugars Ltd; Coromandel Sugars; Chamundeshwari Sugars Ltd; MRN Cane Power & Bio Refineries Pvt Ltd; NSL Sugars Ltd; and Bannari Amman Sugars Ltd.

He added that reports from DC highlighted continued non-cooperation, and stressed that timely payments were essential for farmers' livelihoods. —*Salar News*

GOVT FORMS SIT

Pune child rape: Mumbai-B'luru highway blocked

PUNE, 3 MAY

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been formed to probe the rape and murder of a four-year-old girl in Pune district of Maharashtra, which sparked massive outrage in the city on Sunday with people taking to the streets to vent their spleen.

Hundreds of people blocked the Mumbai-Bengaluru highway in Pune to protest the rape and murder of the minor girl, leading to traffic disruption on the busy route for about four hours.

The girl's family members and other demonstrators placed the body on the road in the Navale Bridge area on Saturday evening and demanded stringent punishment for the 65-year-old man arrested in the case.

A massive traffic jam was triggered when protesters blocked the Mumbai-Bengaluru Expressway late on Saturday —*ANI*

Amid protests and road blockades, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has assured that the government will push for a death penalty for the accused and the trial will be fast-tracked to ensure justice in 'record time'.

The old man allegedly lured the girl in a village in Bhor tehsil of Pune district with the promise of food on Friday and took her to a cattle enclosure where he allegedly sexually assaulted her and later killed her by hitting her with a stone, according to the police. The accused was remanded to police custody till 7 May.

With political leaders cutting across party lines visiting the victim's residence to offer condolences, her father has appealed to politicians not to call on the family until the accused is 'hanged till death.'

Speaking to reporters in Nagpur, the Chief Minister said he spoke to the family of the four-year-old victim and assured them of full cooperation.

The opposition parties have slammed the government over law and order in the state and demanded strict action against the accused. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

Journalists flag decreasing press freedom on WPF day

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

— MAGNIFIC

Journalists and media bodies on Sunday expressed concern over the state of press freedom and the safety of media professionals at a panel discussion marking World Press Freedom Day.

Speakers included Press Association president C K Naik, Editors Guild of India general secretary Raghavan Srinivasan, and Foreign Correspondents Club of South Asia president Waiel Awwad. The event, organised by the Indian Women's Press Corps, focused on "Safeguarding Press Freedom Amidst Global Upheaval".

The discussion followed a report showing India slipped to 157th among 180 countries in the 2026 World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders.

Awwad warned attacks on journalists had become deliberate. "This is part of a systematic attempt to stop the truth from being told," he said, citing targeted killings in Gaza.

Srinivasan flagged structural issues, saying "many troubling trends" like ownership bias and editorial pressure had become normalised.

Naik said, "We have become our own enemy," citing lack of unity.

IWPC president Sujata Raghavan stressed building a stronger environment for journalism. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

Sringeri Cong MLA defeated by 255

DKS alleges vote tampering; BJP celebrates

CHIKKAMAGALURU, 3 MAY

After the reverification and recount of postal ballots for the Sringeri Assembly constituency, votes polled for Congress MLA TD Raje Gowda were reduced by 255, the returning officer said. Raje Gowda had won the 2023 Assembly polls from Sringeri by 201 votes.

A report on the matter has been submitted to the Election Commission for further decision, the officer said.

The Karnataka High Court on 6 April directed the reverification and recounting after BJP's defeated candidate DN Jeevaraj challenged the victory. The counting took place until midnight on Saturday.

"The court order did not direct us to announce the results; it also did not refer to EVM votes. The order was specific only to postal ballots," returning officer Gaurav Kumar Shetty told press.

"During the 2023 vote counting, Jeevaraj had received 692 votes, while Raje Gowda had received 569 votes. Now, after reverification and recounting, Jeevaraj has 690 valid votes, which is two votes less than earlier, while Raje Gowda has 314 votes, a difference of 255 votes."

After the reverification and recounting as per the court order, the strong room was sealed, and a report was sent to the Election Commission.

Congress' TD Raje Gowda amid verification of postal ballots polled for Sringeri Assembly constituency in Chikkamagaluru, Karnataka —PTI

The BJP was jubilant.

LoP R Ashoka accused the Congress and its leader, Rahul Gandhi, of "vote theft."

"The Congress, which has been illegitimately enjoying power in the Sringeri Assembly seat for the past three years, now faces humiliation.

This is not merely the victory of one individual; it is the victory of democracy," he posted on X, congratulating Jeevaraj.

However, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar alleged that a "great crime" had been committed.

"I had not imagined they would stoop to this level. Jeevaraj misused officials and committed fraud in postal ballots. A conspiracy was hatched to tamper with the postal votes received by our candidate and invalidate them... This is a disgrace to the nation and democracy," he said, while he was in Bengaluru.

He said that the party would fight the matter legally.

Sudheer Kumar Murolli, who served as Gowda's counting agent during 2023 assembly polls lodged a complaint at the Chikkamagaluru Town police station, alleging that 255 ballot papers cast in favour of Raje Gowda had been tampered with.

Gowda also alleged that different ink had been used on votes in his favour. Shetty, however, declined to comment on the allegations.

—Salar News with Agencies

Bagalkot, Davangere set for bypoll results

BJP hopes verdict will deliver blow to Cong

BENGALURU, 3 MAY

Bypoll counting for Bagalkot and Davangere South will be held on 4 May, amid tight security, election officials said on Sunday.

Poll officials said the counting of votes would begin at 8am, and the clear picture may emerge by mid-day.

The bypolls were held on 9 April, and necessitated by the deaths of senior Congress MLAs HY Meti (Bagalkot) and Shamanur Shivashankarappa (Davan gere South).

The BJP fielded former MLA and 2023 defeated candidate Veerabhadrayya Charantimath from Bagalkot, and a fresh face, Srinivas T Dasakariyappa, from Davangere South.

The Congress gave tickets to family members of the late legislators in both constituencies. Bagalkot candidate Umesh Meti is the son of HY Meti, while Samarth Mallikarjun from Davangere South is the grandson of Shamanur Shiva shankarappa.

Samarth's father, SS Mallikarjun, is also minister in the Siddaramaiah-led Cabinet and in charge of Davangere district, while his mother, Prabha Mallikarjun, is a Member of Parliament from the region.

Although the outcome of these by-elections is unlikely to have an immediate impact on State politics, the contest is seen as a matter of prestige for both the ruling Congress and the Opposition BJP.

BJP's Veerabhadrayya Charantimath is contesting against Congress' Umesh Meti in from Bagalkot —PTI

While the Congress faces the challenge of retaining both seats, the BJP aims to wrest them and deliver a setback to the ruling party, which it claims is "internal power struggle" over leadership. The BJP also seeks to energise its cadre ahead of the 2028 Assembly elections while a loss for the Congress could be seen as a negative verdict on the performance of the Siddaramaiah-led government.

The Davangere seat, which has a significant Muslim population, will also test the Congress' popularity with minorities, especially given the political controversy that followed when the party chose not to give a ticket to a member of the community.

According to the Election Commission, the voter turnout in Bagalkot was 68.74 per cent, and it was 68.43 per cent in Davangere South.

According to election officials, 14 tables each have been set for vote counting on EVMs at counting centres - University of Horticultural Sciences in Bagalkot and DRR School at Davangere, where nine and 25 candidates were in the fray respectively.

In the 2023 Assembly elections, HY Meti defeated BJP's Charantimath by a margin of 5,878 votes in Bagalkot, while Shivashankarappa defeated BJP's BG Ajay Kumar by 27,888 votes in Davangere South. —PTI

Ashoka flags COMEDK exam centre mismatch

BENGALURU, 3 MAY

BJP leader R Ashoka said on Sunday that several students who had applied to write the Consortium of Medical, Engineering, and Dental Colleges of Karnataka (COMEDK) exam in Bengaluru were "shockingly" allotted centres in Mangaluru, Chennai and Andhra Pradesh.

COMEDK is a national-level, computer-based entrance exam for admission to undergraduate engineering courses in over 150 private unaided engineering colleges in the State.

This comes after several students took to social media to express frustration over the unexpected exam centre allocations.

"At a time when students should be fully focused on their exams, they are instead being pushed into avoidable travel across cities and states - leading to financial strain, anxiety and immense stress for both students and their families," Ashoka stated on X. He urged the Karnataka government to intervene ensure that students get their preferred choice of exam centres. —*Agencies*

Doddaballapur gets new ESIC hospital

BENGALURU, 3 MAY

Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Sunday inaugurated the newly constructed 100-bedded ESIC Hospital at Doddaballapur near Bengaluru.

He also laid the foundation stone for a 100-bedded ESIC Hospital at Ballari, remotely from Doddaballapur.

These healthcare facilities mark a significant milestone in strengthening healthcare delivery under the Employees' State Insurance (ESI) Scheme in the region, officials said at the event.

The Doddaballapur facility will serve over 1,42,037 insured workers and their families, benefiting approximately 5.5 lakh beneficiaries across Bengaluru Rural, Chikkaballapura, Tumakuru, and Kolar districts, a press release stated. The Hospital built over 5 acres at a cost of Rs 101.14 crore.

Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurated the newly constructed ESIC Hospital at Doddaballapur on Sunday —X@MANSUKHMANDVIYA

It has 32 staff quarters and offers key services such as general medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology, paediatrics, orthopaedics, emergency care, and comprehensive diagnostic facilities, including radiology, laboratory services, and a blood bank.

The Ballari facility, upon completion, will cater to the medical needs of around 64,000 workers and their families, benefiting over 2 lakh beneficiaries in the Ballari division, it said. It will be developed on 5.21 acres at an estimated cost of Rs 150 crore and will provide modern healthcare services to insured persons and their families under the ESI Scheme.

Highlighting the regional impact of the newly inaugurated hospital, Mandaviya pointed out that the area hosts multiple textile industries employing over 1.5 lakh registered workers.

"These hospitals will be a boon for the workforce and their families by providing completely free medical services to insured persons and their dependents," he said.

Union Minister of State for Labour and Employment Shobha Karandlaje, Chikkaballapura MP K Sudhakar, and Doddaballapur MP Dheeraj Muniraju were among those present. —*PTI*

NEET ASPIRANTS

Students and their family members wait outside an exam centre before the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) UG-2026 examination, at Maharani College, in Bengaluru on Sunday. At least two students were left devastated after they were denied entry for being 10 minutes late. One of them was a victim of the City's traffic jam. The exam started was from 2-5pm and entry was allowed till 1.30pm —SALAR

All 33 gates at Tungabhadra repaired

BENGALURU, 3 MAY

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said that all 33 new crest gates have been installed at the Tungabhadra Reservoir in Hosapete, Vijayanagara district, alleviating fears of inadequate water storage capacities.

Shivakumar, who also holds the water portfolio, said in a statement that this will benefit 7.5 lakh farmers.

"Officials have said that the remaining work will be completed by 7 May," he stated. "Currently, there is 10.5 TMC of water in the reservoir. If there is good rainfall in the next 2 months, there is a possibility of filling it to 44 TMC."

He claimed that the new gates will last for the next 50 years, and said that farmers from Vijayanagar, Koppal, Ballari, and Raichur districts will be invited on 7 May during the inauguration ceremony.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar in Chikkamagaluru, Karnataka —X@DKSHIVAKUMAR

He added that chains of the crest gates would be repaired as well.

This comes after a dam crest washed away in 2024, reducing the overall storage capacity of the reservoir. —*Salar News*

3 killed, 3 hurt as lorry collides with car

GUNDLUPET, 3 MAY

Three people were killed and three others injured in a tragic accident on the Gundlupet–Kerala National Highway near Maddayanahundi on Sunday morning after a lorry illegally transporting soil collided with a car.

The deceased are Muneer, 30, the car driver from Kannur in Kerala, Munira, 45, and a three-and-a-half-year-old child named Mohij Zhajan. The injured—Sania Mirza, Sahal, Bilaj, and Parveen—received first aid at Gundlupet Taluk Government Hospital before being shifted to Mysuru for further treatment.

The force of the collision completely crushed the car, which fell into a roadside ditch. The lorry's front wheels were torn off, leaving it stranded across the road. Gundlupet police seized both vehicles and launched an investigation.

A lorry illegally transporting soil collided with a car on the Gundlupet–Kerala National Highway near Maddayanahundi on Sunday—SALAR

- The collision completely crushed the car, which fell into a roadside ditch. The lorry's front wheels were torn off, leaving it stranded across the road.

The lorry was allegedly illegally transporting soil to Kerala, including white stone, black stone, M-sand, gravel, and lakebed soil, all mined unlawfully.

The Gundlupet–Kerala National Highway has seen a surge in lorries transporting soil and minerals, leading to frequent accidents.

Farmer leader Bhimanabeedu Raju blamed negligence by police, RTO, and forest officials, demanding immediate action to stop illegal transportation. Allegations suggest poor enforcement at checkposts, with only one DRFO officer posted at Moolehole, encouraging illegal activities. —*Salar News*

Man attacked by crocodile in Uttara Kannada

UTTARA KANNADA, 3 MAY

A man was seriously injured after a crocodile attacked him along the Kali River in Dandeli on Sunday. The victim, Anand, 42, a resident of Kulgi Road, had gone to the river early in the morning. According to reports, the crocodile suddenly attacked him and tried to drag him into the water. Hearing his cries for help, local residents rushed to the scene and managed to chase the reptile away, rescuing him from its grip. Anand sustained severe injuries to his leg and other parts of his body. He was first admitted to a hospital in Dandeli and later shifted to Dharwad for further treatment. Police and forest officials visited the scene and have launched an inquiry. —*SALAR NEWS*

HOMELESS FOR 128 DAYS

BDA demolition: Kogilu families await rehab

BENGALURU, 3 MAY

One hundred and twenty-eight days after Bengaluru's civic authorities demolished their homes, residents of Kogilu layout still await the rehabilitation that the State government promised them. Without proper shelter, the residents were earlier forced to face the severe cold, and now face scorching heat and rains.

Residents alleged that the demolished was carried out by the Bengaluru Development Authority (BDA) without any prior legal notice, and despite them showing proper documentation. Many of the residents were living there for years.

The Kogilu layout slum residents' struggle committee has given the government a 15-day deadline, warning of an indefinite protest if rehabilitation is not provided. Petitioner Zaiba, who filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Karnataka High Court, said that the next hearing is scheduled for 9 June, 2026.

Kogilu Layout slum residents have given the government a 15-day deadline, warning of an indefinite protest if rehabilitation is not provided —PTI

She stated that Karnataka Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda and Housing, Waqf and Minority Welfare Minister Zamir Ahmed Khan had promised houses under the Rajiv Gandhi Housing Corporation scheme, but the promise remains unfulfilled.

Muni Anjanappa of Praja Vimochana Chaluvali said Dalit and Muslim families now feel betrayed and warned of continuous protests.

Residents Shabana, Haseena and Narayanamma demanded either proper housing or land rights to rebuild their homes.

They also alleged that flat keys and Hakku Patra documents were given earlier but were later taken back by officials.

Maiyappa from Bhoomi Mattu Vasanta Vanchitara Korata told Salar News that state officials should visit them now and see the people's plight. -Salar News

State taxation raising petrol prices, says Joshi

CHITRADURGA/ MYSURU, 3 MAY

Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy Pralhad Joshi has said that despite the gas prices being also linked to the global situation, the fuel distribution in India has remained stable, and blamed the State taxation for increase in prices.

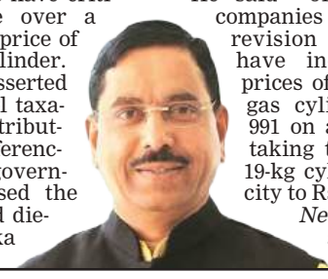
Interacting with the media, he pointed to a rise in international crude prices. The Opposition parties have criticised the Centre over a sharp increase in price of commercial gas cylinder.

Joshi however asserted that the State-level taxation had also contributed to fuel price differences. "The state government has increased the price of petrol and diesel in Karnataka three times. Why did it do this?" he asked.

Meanwhile, in Mysuru, Karnataka Pradesha Congress Committee Spokesperson M Lakshman criticised the Union government over steep hike in commercial LPG cylinders for successive five times over the last few months.

Speaking to reporters he condemned the Centre for allegedly burdening the common people by shifting its financial pressure onto the public.

He said oil marketing companies in the latest revision on 1 May, have increased the prices of commercial gas cylinder by Rs 991 on a single day, taking the cost of a 19-kg cylinder in the city to Rs 3,152. -*Salar News Service/ agencies*



— ANI

Vijay's TVK may struggle to win 4 to 5 seats: DMK

CHENNAI, 3 MAY

Senior DMK leader TKS Elangovan on Sunday took a sharp swipe at actor-turned-politician Vijay's electoral prospects, predicting that his party, TVK, might struggle to win even "four or five seats" in the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections. "Vijay may believe he is in a position to form the next government, but the ground reality suggests a very different outcome. TVK might struggle to win even four or five seats," Elangovan told PTI Videos. He added that the newcomer's influence would be negligible in the face of the state's established political landscape. Expressing confidence in the ruling DMK-led alliance, the veteran leader projected a landslide victory with over 160 seats in the 234-member Assembly. He asserted that the party's performance over the last five years has benefited every household, and that the people want the current government to continue. —*PTI*

Lalu's son Nishant takes on 300km 'Sadbhav Yatra'

PATNA, 3 MAY

JD(U) leader Nishant Kumar, son of Nitish Kumar, departed for West Champaran to begin his 'Sadbhav Yatra', part of his mass contact mission. The 300km yatra will begin from Patna on Monday and end in Valmiki Nagar. The 45-year-old, who joined JD(U) last month, will start from Valmiki Nagar, a site significant to his father's past yatras. JD(U) spokesperson Neeraj Kumar highlighted Nishant's connection to the land of Emperor Ashoka and Sage Valmiki, praising his dispassion for power and commitment to mass contact. He started with seeking his father Nitish Kumar's blessings and left from the party headquarters in a van amid trumpets, conches and flower shower. Nishant told reporters, "My first political journey — Sadbhav Yatra — will begin today. The term 'sadbhav' signifies love and positive feelings. I will take everyone together, leaving no one behind." After Nitish stepped down as chief minister, a new government is being headed by BJP leader Samrat Choudhary. —*PTI*

BJP planning to disrupt counting, alleges DMK

BJP dismissed the allegation saying DMK is rattled

CHENNAI, 3 MAY

Tamil Nadu's ruling DMK on Sunday alleged "plans by BJP to orchestrate disruptions" on 4 May at vote counting centres, sensitive locations, including party offices and claimed apprehensions about large-scale law and order issues and demanded that the election authorities take steps to prevent untoward incidents.

The BJP dismissed the allegation.

Writing to Chief Electoral Officer, Tamil Nadu, Archana Patnaik, DMK Organisation Secretary RS Bharathi said his party had "credible information" indicating that on the date of counting of votes there are plans by the BJP and other political parties to orchestrate disruptions at counting centres.

"Such activities are also apprehended to extend to areas in and around counting booths, as well as other sensitive locations, including party offices," the DMK leader alleged.

In a representation to the CEO, a copy of which was marked to the DGP/Head of Police Force, the DMK leader said: "In light of the above (allegation), there exists a reasonable apprehension of large-scale law and order issues, which may seriously prejudice the conduct of a free and fair electoral process." He urged the EC to take preventive measures, including adequate deployment of security personnel.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK head MK Stalin is defending his seat in Kolathur —*PTI*

Rejecting the allegations, Tamil Nadu BJP leader Narayanan Thirupathy said "this shows that the DMK, which is expecting a great defeat, is rattled and afraid of the BJP." "The DMK wants to come up with reasons for their impending defeat; if the DMK does not resort to violence the vote counting process will go on very smoothly," he told PTI. —*PTI*

UDF allies leave CM selection to Cong

THIRUPURAM, 3 MAY

AICC General Secretary and Kerala in-charge Deepa Dasmunshi said on Sunday that UDF allies had left the decision on the chief ministerial candidate to the Congress in the event of the front coming to power.

Speaking to reporters here, Dasmunshi said discussions had been held with alliance partners on the issue and they had conveyed their willingness to abide by the Congress's decision.

"In the Congress and among our allies, everyone knows there is a procedure. After the results are out, the party will follow its established process. The high command will take the final decision after consultations with the MLAs," she said.

The Congress in Kerala has witnessed a debate over its chief ministerial candidate, with senior leaders VD Satheesan, Ramesh Chennithala and AICC general secretary KC Venugopal among those being discussed for the post. Meanwhile, LDF convenor TP Ramakrishnan said on Sunday that the "false narrative" being spread by the UDF that the Left front was headed for defeat in the Assembly elections would collapse once the results are announced. — PTI

EXPLOSIVES SEIZED IN CM'S CONSTITUENCY

KANNUR, 3 MAY

Police seized crude country bombs and gunpowder, during a search in the Dharmadam Assembly constituency, represented by CM Pinarayi Vijayan, a day ahead of vote counting. Acting on a tip-off about illegal firecracker manufacturing resembling crude bombs, a team of Edakkad police searched a house in Thannada in the Meppoyil area and recovered five country bombs and over three kilograms of explosive powder.

Police registered a case against a resident identified as Nanu in connection with the seizure.

GEORGE'S RS 1 CR BET

BJP candidate PC George said on Sunday that he was confident of a resounding victory from Poonjar, and offered to place a bet of Rs 1 crore to back his claim. "I will win by a massive majority. If anyone has any doubt, they can bet Rs 1 crore," he told a TV channel.

George also predicted victory for his son, Shone George, in Pala, and added that the next Assembly would witness the father-son duo entering the House together. — *PTI*

FOOD COUNTER

BIRIYANI & LADDOOS IN KERALA

With the Kerala Assembly election results set to be announced on Monday, the workers of political parties have begun preparations for celebrations. In Pandikkad in Malappuram district, Congress workers are preparing biryani for around 5,000 people. The BJP is preparing to celebrate in Kochi by ordering large quantities of laddoos. The BJP does not have any MLAs in Kerala, but it hopeful of opening account this time. — *PTI*

'MODISHREE,' 'JOY BANGLA' SANDESH IN WEST BENGAL

With Bengal looks ready to cap off the battle with sweets drenched in the hues of all parties. From saffron "Modishree" and "Joy Bangla" dyed in the TMC's green to the rose-flavoured red sweet named "Lal Salam" of the Left, confectioners are now ready for counting day. — *PTI*

BJP car let in at Bhabanipur counting centre, says TMC

KOLKATA, 3 MAY

The counting centre at West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's Bhabanipur assembly constituency witnessed a ruckus on Sunday, a day before the counting of votes, with TMC workers alleging that two cars bearing the BJP's flag were allowed to enter the compound where EVMs are kept.

The incident comes close on the heels of a four-hour-long sit-in by Banerjee in front of the same counting centre at the Sakhawat Memorial Girls School on Thursday night, alleging unauthorised entry of persons into the strongroom.

On Sunday morning, TMC workers camping 100 metres away from the counting centre alleged that two cars with BJP flags entered the premises and went near the strong-room.

'The CAPF personnel at the spot are not allowing any vehicle or person to enter the premises of the counting centre without valid identity proof. Then how come this car, which we have not seen in the past few days, was allowed entry? Once we protested, the central forces asked us to move 100 metres away,' a TMC activist said. The TMC claimed that while the police personnel posted there promised the vehicle would be removed from the spot, it remained there for some time.

A senior Election Commission official said the car was passing by the Harish Mukherjee Road, and after checking by security forces and police, it was allowed to leave as nothing objectionable was found in it.

The ruling TMC, meanwhile, challenged the BJP to use its full machinery to win the Falta assembly seat, where fresh voting will be held on 21 May after the Election Commission countermanded the polls in the constituency, citing 'severe electoral offences'. EC said fresh polling across all the 285 booths in Falta will be held between 7 am and 6 pm under 'stringent security arrangements to ensure a free, fair and transparent' exercise. Counting of votes will take place on 24 May. —*PTI*

West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC candidate from Bhabanipur, Mamata Banerjee, shows her ink-marked finger after voting in the 2nd phase —*PTI*

WB polls: Kolkata police station gets second OC

The Kolkata Police on Sunday deputed an official of its Bhangar division as the officer in charge (OC) of the Kalighat police station in place of Chameli Mukhopadhyay, who only a day ago replaced Gautam Das, suspended for his controversial social media post. The matter assumed significance ahead of the counting of votes on Monday. Kalighat is considered the backyard of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. Additional officer in charge, Balai Bag, of the Polerhat Police Station under the Bhangar Division, has been appointed as the new OC of Kalighat Police Station with immediate effect. —*PTI*

Protests mark Manipur violence anniversary

IMPHAL/ CHURACHANDPUR, 3 MAY

Rallies, meetings and a shutdown marked the third anniversary of ethnic conflict between the Meitei and Kuki communities in Manipur. The conflict, which started in May 2023, resulted in the death of at least 260 people, the displacement of thousands of residents and the imposition of President's Rule for a year.

The violence between the Meitei and Kuki communities started after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribes status.

Meitei groups held processions across the Imphal Valley demanding NRC implementation and protection of Manipur's integrity, while Kuki-Zo organisations observed a shutdown in Kangpokpi and held meetings in Churachandpur to commemorate victims of the violence. Hundreds of people rallied at Nambol in Bishnupur district under the aegis of the United Protection Committee.

"The rally was organised to highlight the ongoing suffering of the people and to demand accountability and justice for the victims of the conflict," Convenor of United Protection Committee, Th Lamjingba, said. At Iboyaima Shumang Leela Shanglen in Imphal East district, representatives of women's organisation Meira Paibis and COCOMI took part in a public meeting on 'three years on Manipur crisis'.

People hold placards during a protest on the third anniversary of the Manipur violence at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi. —*PTI*

In the Kuki-majority Kangpokpi district, business activities remained shut due to a 12-hour shutdown called by the Committee on Tribal Unity (COTU) from 6am, officials said. The COTU is demanding a separate administration for the Kuki people, claiming that it has become impossible for the Kukis to live with the Meiteis. A 'Separation day from Meiteis' was also observed by Kuki Zo groups at two places in Churchandpur.

Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's population and live mostly in the Imphal Valley, while tribals, which include Nagas and Kukis, constitute 40 per cent and reside mainly in the hill districts. —*PTI*

Congress seeks parliamentary debate on Great Nicobar concerns

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

The Congress has demanded that issues surrounding the Great Nicobar project be debated in Parliament, citing concerns over ecology, tribal rights, transparency, and security. The opposition claims the Modi government is "rattled" and in damage control after Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi's visit last week.

Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh stated, "The Modi Government, clearly in damage control mode after Rahul Gandhi's impactful visit, issued a press note on the project three days later." He criticised the note for not addressing concerns raised by local communities, environmentalists, anthropologists, and civil society. Ramesh added, "These concerns had already been conveyed to the Union Minister of Environment, Forests & Climate Change."

During his visit, Gandhi called the project "one of the biggest scams and gravest crimes against the natural and tribal heritage." The government responded, claiming the project aims to strengthen India's presence in the Andaman Sea while balancing environmental safeguards and protecting indigenous communities.

Ramesh highlighted ecological concerns, stating Great Nicobar's unique ecosystem is being ignored.

He criticised the use of only 1.82 per cent of land, arguing it overlooks ecological richness. He raised issues about Galathea Bay, coral colonies, turtle nesting sites, conflict of interest in environmental institutions, and unsatisfactory tribal consultations, especially with the Nicobarese and Shompen communities. —*PTI*

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi with party workers and leaders during his visit to Great Nicobar Island, in Andaman and

AS AAP MLA LEAVES JAIL

Restrictions clamped in Doda for 2 months

JAMMU, 3 MAY

The administration on Sunday imposed a ban on unauthorised assemblies and protests in parts of Jammu and Kashmir's Doda town for a period of two months under Section 163 of the BNSS, citing apprehensions of public disturbance and threat to peace.

The step has been taken in view of the expectations of large gatherings of people in public events of recently released AAP MLA Mehraj Malik in his native Doda district. According to an order issued by District Magistrate Krishan Lal, the administration observed that some people were allegedly planning demonstrations and trying to mobilise gatherings, which could lead to untoward incidents and disturb public order.

"In exercise of powers vested in me I hereby order a complete ban over any unauthorised gathering of 5 or more than 5 persons and organising protests or Dharnas in the public places - Clock tower chowk, Dessa road upto Akramabad, sports stadium, within the radius of 100 meters from the sports stadium and from clock tower up to old Bus Stand except for the events for which the permission has been already granted," Lal said in the order.

The administration said such gatherings could cause obstruction and inconvenience to commuters, passengers and pedestrians, besides posing a threat to public safety. However, events for which prior permission has already been granted will remain exempted, it said. Violators will be booked under Section 223 of the BNSS, the order said. —*PTI*

The administration observed that some people were allegedly planning demonstrations and trying to mobilise gatherings, which could lead to untoward incidents and disturb public order —*PTI*

— PTI

Odisha's Omfed hikes milk price by Rs 4 per litre

BHUBANESWAR, 3 MAY

The Odisha State Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation (OMFED) has increased the price of milk by Rs 4 per litre, citing a rise in processing and transportation costs. Fisheries and Animal Resources Development Minister Gokulananda Mallik hiked the price of toned milk from Rs 50 to Rs 54 per litre, while the cost of premium milk rose from Rs 54 to Rs 58 per litre. Similarly, the price of gold premium milk was revised from Rs 56 to Rs 60 per litre, while the gold premium plus variant will now cost Rs 64 per litre. He said the revised price took effect on Sunday. Mallik said the 500 ml pouches of toned milk and premium milk will now sell for Rs 27 and Rs 29. Meanwhile, Omfed has also enhanced the price of a litre of cow milk procured from farmers by Rs 1 to Rs 39.05. Similarly, farmers will now get Rs 1.60 per litre extra for selling buffalo milk to Omfed. —*PTI*

Man dragged on car bonnet for 2 km in Hyd

HYDERABAD, 3 MAY

A middle-aged man was dragged for about 2 km on a car bonnet in Meerpet following a dispute over a turn, police said on Sunday. A video from 1 May night shows the man holding onto the moving vehicle's bonnet. The man and his son, travelling on a two-wheeler, signalled for a U-turn when the car driver questioned their early indication. An argument ensued, and the driver allegedly pulled the son's hair before driving on. The father then held onto the bonnet to stop the car, which continued dragging him until it stopped in Balapur, where the driver fled. The man sustained injuries, and a case has been registered at the Meerpet police station.—*PTI*

NCB officials suspended over BSF man's death

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

Two Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) officials have been suspended following the death of BSF Constable Jaswinder Singh in custody, sources said. Singh died of cardiac arrest after experiencing two episodes while being treated at Pulse Hospital on 19-20 March. Arrested in Jammu and being transported to Amritsar in connection with an investigation, Singh reportedly had links to Pakistan operatives via two virtual numbers. Despite medical attention, Singh suffered chest pains and died at 4am. The NHRC guidelines are being followed, and a post-mortem, inquest, and inquiry are underway. The case is under investigation, with Singh's family demanding justice. The officials' suspension was confirmed.—*PTI*

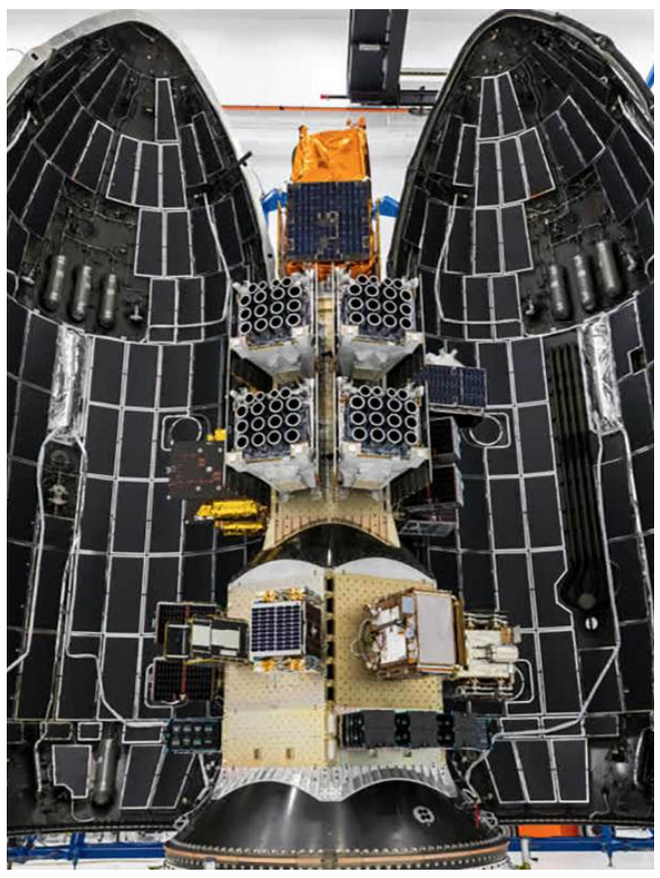
Odisha cops seize chemicals used to make hashish oil

BHUBANESWAR, 3 MAY

Odisha Police seized about 800 litres of chemicals and solvents intended for manufacturing hashish oil from a vehicle in Malkangiri district, officials said. Around 50 kg of marijuana and two litres of hashish oil were also recovered, but the driver fled. Police suspect smugglers aimed to set up a hashish oil unit in ChitraKonda but failed due to patrols. The vehicle, with a fake registration, carried processing equipment and chemicals for drug production. Superintendent of Police Vinodh Patil H said teams are working to arrest the driver and others involved. The police continue efforts to dismantle the illegal activity.—*PTI*

SpaceX launches Indian start-up's 'Drishti'

1st ever satellite to merge electro-optical & SAR sensors



'Drishti' will help address long-standing limitations of conventional systems and enable more reliable data acquisition —*ANI*

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

Bengaluru-based space start-up GalaxEye's Mission Drishti satellite was launched on Sunday aboard SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket from California.

Mission Drishti is the world's first OptoSAR satellite, integrating electro-optical (EO) and synthetic aperture radar (SAR) sensors into a single operational platform, the company said.

While EO sensors capture high-resolution images in bright sunlight under clear skies, SAR sensors provide all-weather and all-time images, using radar pulses.

In a statement, Suyash Singh, founder and CEO of GalaxEye, said, "With the satellite (Mission Drishti) now successfully in orbit, our focus is on completing its commissioning. As we move through this phase, we are already witnessing strong global interest in the differentiated datasets enabled by our OptoSAR payload."

The satellite will help address long-standing limitations of conventional systems and enable more reliable and consistent data acquisition in all environmental conditions, the company said.

As a dual-use Earth observation satellite, the mission will support uses in defence, agriculture, disaster management, maritime monitoring, and infrastructure planning.

- While EO sensors capture high-resolution images in bright sunlight, SAR sensors provide all-weather pics using radar pulses

The satellite is also expected to complement India's broader initiatives, including the 29 active Earth Observation satellites outlined in ISRO's recent annual report.

The launch came after five years of indigenous research and development, and extensive environmental testing of the satellite.

In a statement, Lt Gen AK Bhatt (Retd), director general of Indian Space Association (ISpA), said, "GalaxEye has achieved what only a few global players have, which is seamlessly combining optical and SAR capabilities on a single platform to enable all-weather intelligence."

ISpA is the premier industry association of space and satellite companies in the country.

Union Minister Jitendra Singh said in a statement that Mission Drishti marked a significant milestone in India's space adventure. — *PTI*

The NCW has taken suo motu cognisance of a report alleging the capturing and circulation of a woman's private images during surgery—*AI*

UP woman filmed during surgery

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

The National Commission for Women (NCW) has taken suo motu cognisance of a report alleging unauthorised capturing and circulation of a female patient's private images during surgery at a medical college in Uttar Pradesh's Kaushambi.

Media reports said that recently objectionable photographs showing a 22-year-old female patient's face and private parts during surgery at a government-run autonomous medical college in Kaushambi were circulated on WhatsApp groups linked to officials and media personnel.

In a post on X on Saturday, the commission said its chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar has directed the UP DGP to ensure immediate registration of an FIR, identification and action against the culprits.

She also directed prompt cyber intervention to remove the content and a thorough probe into security lapses within the institution.

A detailed ATR has been sought within seven days, the commission added. The NCW termed the incident a "deeply disturbing" violation of medical ethics, dignity and the fundamental right to privacy, raising serious concerns about safety and accountability in healthcare institutions.

Strongly condemning the act, it said such actions are "reprehensible," constitute criminal offences and cause "severe trauma" to the victim and also erodes public trust.

The commission also sought measures to protect the victim's identity and to provide legal and psychological support, and has asked the National Medical Commission (NMC) to take action under the NMC Act, 2019 and other regulations. — *PTI*

TTD used 70L kg ghee without testing

AMARAVATI, 3 MAY

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu had appointed retired IAS officer Dinesh Kumar to probe the supply of adulterated ghee to the TTD—*ANI*

A one-man commission constituted by the Andhra Pradesh government on Saturday revealed that the TTD procured over 70 lakh kilograms of ghee, used in preparing the famous Tirupati laddus, without mandatory quality checks.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu appointed a one-man commission headed by retired IAS officer Dinesh Kumar to probe the supply of allegedly adulterated ghee to the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams after the Supreme Court-appointed SIT submitted its report.

The report submitted by the commission claimed that this "systemic failure" allowed suppliers to provide adulterated ghee, as officials allegedly ignored safety tests and suppressed lab reports that confirmed the presence of vegetable fats.

The report cites systemic administrative failures—especially weak tender enforcement—as the root cause, saying key safeguards eroded, lab reports confirming adulteration were suppressed, and procurement bypassed full oversight, undermining due process. The panel also found that procurement committee members allegedly relaxed tender norms without the full committee or convener's approval, allowed post-bid price reductions after reverse auctions, and accepted abnormally low bids without scrutiny.

It highlighted that eligibility norms introduced in August 2019 were allegedly diluted within months without proper assessment, allowing non-compliant firms such as Bhole Baba Organic Dairy Milk Pvt Ltd to enter the supply chain despite lacking verifiable production capacity.

The probe found Bhole Baba Organic Dairy continued supplying despite disqualification, allegedly using synthetic additives and intermediaries to bypass checks. Premier Agri Foods Pvt Ltd also continued to get orders despite confirmed adulteration and was granted exemptions from FSSAI testing norms, the report said. — *PTI*

SC HEARING TODAY

Limit new Aadhaar to kids below 6, says PIL

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a plea seeking a direction to the Unique Identification Authority of India to issue new Aadhaar cards only to citizens aged up to six, and to frame strict guidelines for issuance to adolescents and adults to stop infiltrators from masquerading as Indian citizens. As per the SC's causelist of 4 May, the plea would come up for hearing before a bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi.

The Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by lawyer Ashwini Upadhyay also sought a direction to the authorities to install display boards at all Aadhaar common service centres stating that the 12-digit unique identification number is only a "proof of identity" and not proof of citizenship, address or date of birth.

The plea, filed through advocate Ashwani Dubey, said Aadhaar, originally intended as a proof of identity for individuals, has increasingly become a "foundational document" enabling individuals to obtain other identification documents, like ration cards, domicile certificates and voter identity cards. — *PTI*

Man opens jet's emergency exit at Chennai

CHENNAI, 3 MAY

Tension gripped an Air Arabia flight when a passenger opened one of the emergency exit doors while the flight was taxiing at the Chennai International Airport.

An Air Arabia flight carrying 231 passengers arrived in Chennai from Sharjah early on Sunday.

As the aircraft was moving along the taxiway, the designated path connecting the runway and the terminal, a man, 34, from Pudukkottai, opened one of the emergency exit doors.

The pilot immediately brought the aircraft to a halt and alerted the authorities.

Responding swiftly, CISF personnel, including bomb disposal experts and armed officers, rushed to the location where the aircraft had stopped.

The pilot lodged a formal complaint with the authorities regarding the incident.

Security personnel boarded the aircraft, arrested the passenger, and took him into custody. Officials are questioning the passenger, and his mental condition is also being assessed. — *PTI*

'Thunderstorms, gusty winds likely in Andhra'

AMARAVATI, 3 MAY

As temperatures continue to hover above 44 degrees Celsius in Andhra Pradesh, the IMD forecast thunderstorms, rains and gusty winds in the next five days, offering some relief from the heat.

The IMD Centre in Amaravati said that isolated thunderstorms are likely over Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, and Rayalaseema from 3 May for five days.

Isolated gusty winds of up to 60 kmph are likely over North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam, while winds of up to 40 kmph are expected over Rayalaseema.

The IMD said that on 4 May, similar conditions are likely to continue, with thunderstorms likely in Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam and Rayalaseema along with gusty winds. On 5 and 6 May, isolated heavy rainfall and strong winds are likely over North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam.

On 7 May, isolated thunderstorms and gusty winds are likely over Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam and Rayalaseema.

Meanwhile, two girls died and a boy was injured in UP's Sonbhadra when they were struck by lightning while collecting mangoes under a tree on Saturday, police said on Sunday. — *PTI*

MP TRAGEDY TOLL NOW 13; LAST BODY FOUND

JABALPUR, 3 MAY

The bodies of a five-year-old boy and his uncle were recovered from Bargi Dam in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur district on Sunday, raising the death toll in the boat tragedy to 13, police said. The boat, around 20 years old and operated by the state tourism department, capsized during a storm on Thursday.

"The bodies of Mayuram, 5, and his uncle Kamraj, 50, an employee of the Ordnance Factory in Khamaria, were were retrieved," Bargi Sub Divisional Officer of Police Anjul Ayank Mishra said.

All 13 missing persons have now been accounted for, he said, adding the bodies were sent to a government hospital for autopsy.

Rescue personnel conduct a search at the scene of Thursday's boat tragedy in the Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh on Sunday— *PTI*

Teams comprising around 20 Army divers flown from Agra, along with personnel from the National Disaster Response Force, State Disaster Response Force and local divers, were involved in the search, the police said.

Of the 41 identified passengers aboard the vessel, 28 were rescued after the incident, the police said. — *PTI*

GOOD SAMARITAN

Jaipur man turns SUV into ambulance

JAIPUR, 3 MAY

A Jaipur-based tax consultant has been using his SUV as an improvised ambulance for over two decades, helping to rush accident victims to hospitals in time and saving several lives.

Sandeep Gupta, a resident of Malviya Nagar, has so far rushed over 120 injured persons to hospitals in his vehicle, including at least 35 whose lives were saved due to his timely intervention.

Recalling what inspired him, Gupta said that about 22 years ago, he witnessed a critically injured accident victim die while people waited for an ambulance near the state assembly area.

"That incident deeply touched me. I decided that no injured person should have to wait for an ambulance," he said. Since then, Gupta stops whenever he spots an accident victim and takes them to the nearest hospital. His vehicle is equipped with first-aid, sheets and emergency signage, and a siren.

Sandeep Gupta, a tax consultant and a resident of Malviya Nagar, poses for photographs with his SUV ambulance in Jaipur on Saturday—*PTI*

- Sandeep Gupta has so far rushed over 120 injured persons to hospitals in his SUV

He said the traffic police have been supportive, and in 2016, the DCP (traffic) issued a letter felicitating his work and ensuring right of way during emergencies.

Mridul Gautam recalled that he and his younger brother were severely injured in a road accident in 2017 and were rushed to hospital by Gupta. "Doctors said timely help saved us," he said.

Similarly, Yogita Sharma said she was rescued and taken to hospital by Gupta after a serious accident in 2009 when she was left injured in a roadside pit. — *PTI*

Naxal blast ends wedding dreams of 2 Ch'garh cops

KANKER, 3 MAY

Just weeks after his betrothal, 29-year-old police constable Sanjay Gadhpale's plans for a January wedding were cut short by a blast in Chhattisgarh's Kanker district, leaving his grieving father to wonder who will now fulfil the family's dreams.

Gadhpale was one of the four policemen killed on Saturday while attempting to dispose of a gunpowder dump hidden by Maoists in a forest near Aadnar village in Kanker district. Gadhpale, a resident of Haradula village in Charama area, had joined the force in 2022. On Saturday, a police team came to his house and informed the family about his death, the constable's father, Suresh Gadhpale, said.

The Gadhpale family's grief is mirrored in Durgkondal, where the mother of constable Krishna Komra, 35, clings to the memory of a final phone call he made moments before he headed into the forest for his last operation. "We were planning his wedding next year," Komra's mother Devki Bai said.

- Gadhpale was one of the 4 jawans killed while neutralising a Maoist gunpowder dump

Constable Korram, 29, a resident of Barethin village, was another jawan from Kanker district who lost his life in Saturday's blast.

Inspector Sukhram Vatti, 40, of the DRG, who hailed from Chihka village in Bijapur district, was leading the team and was the fourth policeman to be killed in the incident. — *PTI*

Will it be a turning point for women in TN politics?

The dust has settled on the polling booths across Tamil Nadu and the state now holds its breath for 4 May when the winners of an intensely fought election will be declared. While the headlines focus on the clash of political titans and the survival of Dravidian legacies, a quieter but more profound transformation is being measured in the electoral ledgers.

This year, a record-breaking 443 women stood as contesting candidates - a stark climb from the numbers seen just a decade ago. Yet, as the talk of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam and the promise of 33 per cent legislative reservation dominates national discourse, Tamil Nadu's own history reveals a journey that has been as much about regression as it has been about progress.

The statistical journey of women in the Tamil Nadu Assembly is a study in contradictions. At its peak, it yielded a 31.37 per cent participation from women, a few percentages short of 33-mark that India aims at present.

However, perhaps the most startling entry in the Election Commission archives is the year 1971. In a state that had seen women winners as early as 1951, the 1971 Assembly election recorded zero women contestants. Historians point to a unique political squeeze: a strategic alliance where the Indira Gandhi-led Congress, which till then had fielded women candidates, focused solely on the Lok Sabha, leaving the Assembly to the DMK and the K Kamaraj-led Congress (O).

In the high-stakes battle between these male-dominated fronts, women were entirely sidelined from the final ballot. It remains the only time the Tamil Nadu Assembly sat without a single female voice.

Twenty years down the line, in 1991, the state saw its highest-ever representation of women, with 32 members elected to the House. of the 171 women nominated, 102 finally ended up contesting of which 32 won (31.37 per cent). It was a year that felt like a threshold. But history rarely moves in a straight line. By 1996, that number had plummeted to just nine.

As we approach the 2026 results, the central question remains: can the "cradle of social justice" finally break its own 35-year-old record and move toward a truly representative House?

Women show their identity cards as they queue to vote at a polling station during the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, in Chennai -PTI

- The dust has settled on the polling booths across Tamil Nadu and the state now holds its breath for 4 May when the winners of an intensely fought election will be declared. While the headlines focus on the clash of political titans and the survival of Dravidian legacies, a quieter but more profound transformation is being measured in the electoral ledgers. This year, a record-breaking 443 women stood as contesting candidates - a stark climb from the numbers seen just a decade ago. Yet, as the talk of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam and the promise of 33 per cent legislative reservation dominates national discourse, Tamil Nadu's own history reveals a journey that has been as much about regression as it has been about progress.

In the 2026 cycle, the narrative has shifted significantly. The surge in nominations - peaking at nearly 1,000 filings before the final count of 443 contestants - suggests a growing appetite for political participation that transcends party tickets. A significant portion of this growth comes from independent candidates and smaller regional outfits, challenging the traditional gatekeeping of the major Dravidian parties, including the DMK and AIADMK.

The 2026 cycle also continues a trend where nearly 46 per cent of women candidates contest from urban centres like Chennai, Madurai, Coimbatore, and Tiruchirappalli. This is often attributed to higher literacy rates and more accessible campaign infrastructure in cities.

While the number of women in rural constituencies has grown, the pace is slower than in urban areas. Most rural female candidates are fielded by major parties or are high-profile local leaders, whereas independent women candidates are significantly more common in urban lists.

However, the gap between "contesting" and "winning" remains a chasm.

In 2021, despite a then-record 413 women candidates, only 12 managed to secure a seat in the 234-member house — a dismal 5 per cent representation. This discrepancy highlights the "ornamental" nature of many candidacies, where women are often fielded in seats where the party expects to lose, or as independents without the financial muscle of their male counterparts. The conversation around the 33 per cent reservation bill has added a layer of nuance to the results. As the leads begin to trickle in from counting centres, the "Women Winners" column will be watched as a barometer for the state's political maturity.

Will the 2026 Assembly finally reflect the demographic reality of Tamil Nadu, or will the 33 per cent mark remain a distant promise, discussed in rallies but absent from the halls of power? For the 443 women in the fray, the wait is almost over. —PTI

SALAR ساڵار

Kerala awaits high-stakes triangular fight result

Kerala's political fate will be decided on Monday as counting of votes for the 9 April Assembly elections begins, bringing to a close an intense and high-stakes contest among the ruling LDF, the opposition UDF, and the BJP-led NDA.

The results are crucial for all three fronts as they seek to strengthen their position in the state's evolving political landscape.

A total of 883 candidates contested the election for 140 seats in the state.

With most exit polls predicting a close contest but giving an edge to the UDF, political parties and leaders will be closely watching the results.

For the Congress-led UDF, which has remained out of power since 2016, the election is being viewed as a do-or-die battle.

Buoyed by its performance in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, Assembly bypolls, and local body elections, the Congress-led front is optimistic, and discussions over a possible chief ministerial candidate have already surfaced within the party.

The UDF aims for a significant improvement from the 41 seats it won in the 2021 Assembly election, with some exit polls projecting 80–90 seats.

The ruling LDF, however, citing forecasts of a close contest, remains hopeful of retaining power for a third consecutive term.

Though matching its 2021 tally of 99 seats appears unlikely, the front expects to secure around 75–80 seats, claiming that the government's development initiatives will translate into votes.

A defeat for the LDF would also mark the first time since the 1960s that Left parties are not in power in any Indian state.

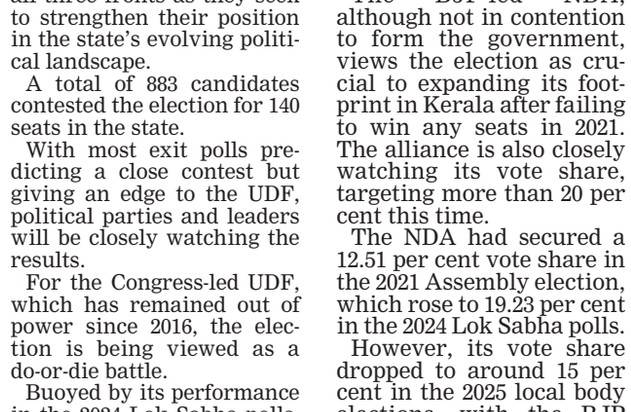
The BJP-led NDA, although not in contention to form the government, views the election as crucial to expanding its footprint in Kerala after failing to win any seats in 2021. The alliance is also closely watching its vote share, targeting more than 20 per cent this time.

The NDA had secured a 12.51 per cent vote share in the 2021 Assembly election, which rose to 19.23 per cent in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

However, its vote share dropped to around 15 per cent in the 2025 local body elections, with the BJP securing 14.76 per cent.

After winning the Thiruvananthapuram Corporation in the local body polls and tying up with the Twenty20 party, the NDA expects gains in the state capital district and parts of central Kerala.

Observers will also closely track the extent of Christian support garnered by the NDA after fielding several Christian candidates in central Kerala, as well as the electoral impact of the FCRA Amendment Bill, which was a major campaign issue during the election. —PTI



THE COUNTING PROCESS

The strong rooms where Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and VVPAT units are stored will be opened first in the presence of Election Commission observers, security personnel, and representatives of candidates. Postal ballots — which account for 1.36 per cent of the total votes polled — will be counted first. Special counting tables have been arranged for postal ballots, with each table handling up to 500 votes under the supervision of an assistant returning officer.

Votes polled in EVMs from a maximum of 14 polling stations will be counted in each round, and a broad picture of the election outcome is expected by the afternoon.

Election Commission officials said VVPAT slips will be counted in cases where discrepancies arise between the number of votes recorded at a booth and the figures stored in the EVMs.

Security arrangements have been put in place, with 25 companies of central forces deployed alongside state police personnel. Officials said that 15,464 personnel have been deployed for the counting exercise.

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

TMC looks to retain WB, BJP aims historic win

West Bengal heads into verdict day on Monday after over a month of frenzied campaigning, as it waits with bated breath to see whether the TMC manages to hold on to power or the BJP makes a historic breakthrough and claims the state for the first time.

As the EVMs open, the CPI(M) and the Congress will be watching with equal keenness, hoping to reclaim a foothold in the state's electoral map after five years in the wilderness, following their wipeout in the 2021 polls.

Counting of votes will take place across 77 centres in the state, with elaborate security arrangements amid a charged political atmosphere.

The state's political climate bordered on the vicious, even after the conclusion of polls, leading to fervent anticipation ahead of the announcement of results, with both primary contenders TMC and BJP, claiming they were dead certain about their victory prospects.

Courtesy the tight security arrangements – with over 2.5 lakh central paramilitary personnel on the ground, besides the presence of a thoroughly reshuffled state police force – electoral violence remained at a minimum, and no deaths were reported for the first time in the state's election history of recent decades.

This was also the first election held in the state in 20 years, conducted after an extensive, albeit controversial, SIR exercise that revised the electoral rolls, removing over 9 million voters.

The jury is out on the impact of the exercise on the electoral fortunes of all parties across the board, prompting pollsters to burn the midnight oil to make sense of the likely choice of voters and keeping the public greatly enthused about what verdict the result day would deliver. The campaigns recorded the BJP unleashing its full might, with top leaders like Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launching all-out attacks on the TMC over corruption, law and order, infiltration, women's safety and unemployment, while promising welfare measures.

The TMC's retaliation, with the CM and party MP Abhishek Banerjee leading the charge, focused on SIR harassment, Bengali persecution and 'outsider' plank, accusing the BJP of failing to deliver on its national commitments and upholding TMC's development report card.

The run-up to counting, however, has been marked by high political drama, with TMC leaders rushing to strongrooms in Kolkata, alleging attempts to tamper with the sealed EVMs. The EC rejected those allegations. —PTI

TMC Supremo Mamata Banerjee is taking on BJP's Suvendu Adhikari in Bhabanipur in an unpredictable battle -PTI

- West Bengal heads into verdict day on Monday after over a month of frenzied campaigning, as it waits with bated breath to see whether the TMC manages to hold on to power or the BJP makes a historic breakthrough and claims the state for the first time. As the EVMs open, the CPI(M) and the Congress will be watching with equal keenness, hoping to reclaim a foothold in the state's electoral map after five years in the wilderness, following their wipeout in the 2021 polls.

BJP hat-trick or Cong comeback? Assam decides

The battle for Assam will enter its final stage with the counting of votes on Monday, determining whether the BJP-led NDA gets a third term or the Congress wrests power after weeks of wrangling marked by identity politics, welfare delivery and regional aspirations.

EVMs, holding the electoral fates of 722 hopefuls from 126 assembly constituencies of the state, will be opened at 40 counting centres across all 35 districts amid tight security arrangements.

Among the contestants, 59 are women. Counting in Nagaon district will be held in three separate centres, while in Kokrajhar, Tinsukia and Jorhat it will be held at two centres each.

Twenty-five companies of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) have been deployed to guard the counting centres and the strongrooms.

Polling in the state was held on 9 April, with 85.96 per cent of the over 2.50 crore electorate exercising their franchise.

Among the 722 candidates, Congress has the highest 99, followed by BJP with 90, AIUDF with 30, NDA allies Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) with 26 and Bodo Peoples' Front (BPF) with 11 nominees.

In the opposition alliance, Raijor Dal contested in 13 seats, Assam Jatiya Parishad in 10, CPI(M) in three, and All Party Hill Leaders Conference in two.

The Aam Aadmi Party and United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) each contested in 18 seats, the TMC in 22, the JMM in 16. Besides, there are 258 Independent candidates.

Among the high-profile candidates whose electoral fate will be decided on Monday are Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, the Congress' state unit chief Gaurav Gogoi, assembly Speaker Biswajit Daimary, Leader of the Opposition Debabrata Saikia, AIUDF Chief Badruddin Ajmal, Raijor Dal Chief and MP Akhil Gogoi, and Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) chief Lurinjyoti Gogoi. Several cabinet ministers, including the AGP's Atul Bora and Keshav Mahanta, and the BPF's Charan Boro, are also in the fray.

The ruling BJP-led NDA's main constituents are the Asom Gana Parishad and the Bodo Peoples' Front, while the opposition alliance comprises the Congress, Raijor Dal, AJP, CPI(M), All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC) and CPI(ML).

The ruling BJP's strength in the outgoing assembly is 64, while its allies -- the AGP has nine, the UPPL seven and the BPF, which rejoined the alliance, has three MLAs.

In the opposition camp, the Congress has 26 members, the AIUDF has 15, the CPI(M) has one, and there is also an Independent legislator. —PTI

Assam Congress Chief Gaurav Gogoi and Chief Minister and BJP candidate Himanta Biswa Sarma have a lot at stake this election -PTI

- The battle for Assam will enter its final stage with the counting of votes on Monday, determining whether the BJP-led NDA gets a third term or the Congress wrests power after weeks of wrangling marked by identity politics, welfare delivery and regional aspirations. EVMs, holding the electoral fates of 722 hopefuls from 126 assembly constituencies of the state, will be opened at 40 counting centres across all 35 districts amid tight security arrangements.

‘Nazi’ plotting to murder Dutch Princess faces trial

NETHERLANDS, 3 MAY

The Netherlands authorities thwarted an attack on Princess Catharina-Amalia, 22, and her sister, Princess Alexia, 20. A 33-year-old man suspected of far-right extremist views was arrested in The Hague in February. The suspect was found with two axes engraved with “Alexia,” “Mossad,” and “Sieg Heil,” along with a handwritten note bearing “Amalia,” “Alexia,” and “bloodbath.” He is scheduled to appear in court on Monday, as per an official order from The Hague Public Prosecutor’s Office. Authorities have not disclosed the suspect’s identity or motive, citing Dutch privacy laws. Amalia, heir to the Dutch throne, has previously faced multiple threats, including a gang plot to kidnap her with Dutch Prime Minister Rutte. *—AGENCIES*

RSF drone strike kills five near Sudan capital

CAIRO, 3 MAY

A drone attack by Sudan’s paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has killed at least five people on the outskirts of Khartoum, according to a local rights organisation. Emergency Lawyers, which monitors violence against civilians, stated the attack occurred on Saturday morning, striking a civilian vehicle travelling from White Nile province to Omdurman, the sister city of Khartoum. Khartoum has largely been spared recent RSF attacks since being recaptured by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) last year. The RSF did not immediately claim responsibility for the attack. The conflict that erupted in April 2023 has resulted in at least 59,000 deaths, though aid organisations suggest the actual toll is likely higher. *—PTI*

Mexican officials step down amid US drug charges

MEXICO CITY, 3 MAY

In Mexico, two officials from President Claudia Sheinbaum’s party in Sinaloa, faced US drug trafficking charges and announced temporary resignations. Governor Rubén Rocha Moya, accused of protecting the Sinaloa cartel, denied all allegations. He plans a leave to defend himself and cooperate with investigations. Culiacán Mayor Juan de Dios Gámez Mendívil also said he would take leave, denying the accusations. Senator Enrique Inzunza said he would remain in the Senate. Yeraldine Bonilla Valverde will take over as interim governor. Rocha and Gámez Mendívil, who had immunity, will now be subject to arrest if needed. Sheinbaum emphasised her government’s commitment to fighting corruption. *—PTI*

Rat poison put in baby food? Austria detains suspect

VIENNA, 3 MAY

Police in eastern Austria say a 39-year-old suspect has been arrested after rat poison was found in some HiPP baby food jars on supermarket shelves in central Europe. The company, which recalled products in Austria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, said Saturday it was “greatly relieved” by the arrest and will share updates as details are confirmed. The Burgenland State Criminal Police Office, under the direction of prosecutors, said a probe was launched in the city of Eisenstadt on 18 April. Five tampered baby food jars were seized before they could be consumed. Authorities believe the tampering occurred in 190-gram jars of baby food for five-month-olds sold at SPAR supermarkets in Austria. HiPP responded by recalling all its baby food jars sold at SPAR.*—PTI*

Bad deal or war: Iran says US must choose

Trump says he’s reviewing Iran’s 14 point proposal, but can’t imagine accepting it

WASHINGTON, 3 MAY

Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said that the US must choose between a “bad deal” or an “impossible war” after President Doanld Trump confirmed that he has received Tehran’s latest peace proposal but “can’t imagine accepting it”.

“Iran sets Pentagon a blockade deadline,” stated the IRGC’s Intelligence Organisation on X on Sunday. Axios quoted two sources as saying that the proposal set a one-month deadline for negotiations.

While the full details of Iran’s latest peace proposal, sent to the US through Pakistan, are not yet public, key points include opening the Strait of Hormuz in exchange for a deescalation of hostilities and easing economic pressure, and concession from Washington on Tehran’s nuclear programme.

Trump said earlier that he had received the proposal and would review it.

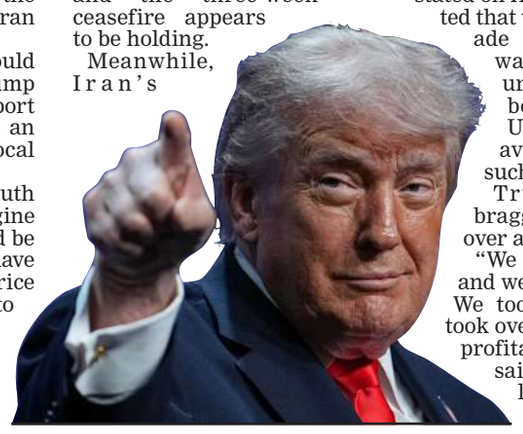
However, he added that the US could begin striking Iran “if they misbehave”.

“It’s a possibility that could happen, certainly,” Trump said at the Palm Beach airport after a round of golf and an appointment with his local dentist.

Later, he posted on his Truth Social that he “can’t imagine that it (the proposal) would be acceptable in that they have not yet paid a big enough price for what they have done to humanity, and the world, over the last 47 years”.

Trump rejected a previous Iranian proposal this week, saying he was not satisfied with it. However, conversations have continued, and the three-week ceasefire appears to be holding.

The new Iranian proposal has repotedly set a 1 month deadline for US President Donald Trump *—IRNA*



Meanwhile, Iran’s Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmail Baghaei stated on X that Trump admitted that the US’ naval blockade on Iranian ports was “piracy”, and urged international bodies like the United Nations to avoid normalising such statements.

Trump earlier bragged about taking over an Iranian vessel.

“We ... land on top of it and we took over the ship. We took over the cargo, took over the oil. It’s a very profitable business,” he said at a rally. “We’re like pirates.”

—Agencies

UK sets out fuel contingency plans for flights

LONDON, 3 MAY

Airlines will be expected to consolidate schedules on certain routes with multiple flights to the same destination on the same day as part of contingency measures the UK government announced on Sunday.

The Department for Transport (DfT) issued a series of temporary plans amid ongoing jet fuel supply issues, and stressed that while UK airlines say they are not currently facing supply issues. It said that the government is stepping in to protect travellers from the likelihood of last-minute flight cancellations over the upcoming summer holiday period.

“There are no immediate supply issues, but we’re preparing now to give families long-term certainty and avoid unnecessary disruption at the departure gate this summer,” the statement said.

The plans are designed to enable airlines to plan realistically and lock in schedules earlier so that people are less likely to be affected by short notice changes at the airport.

Instead of cancelling flights at the last minute, the measures would help move passengers onto similar services, prevent running flights which have not sold a significant proportion of tickets and reduce wasted fuel from flying near-empty planes. *—PTI*

UN forces operating in southern Lebanon, as seen from northern Israel *—PTI*

Israel issues fresh evacuation orders in Lebanese towns

BEIRUT, 3 MAY

Israel’s military issued new displacement orders on Sunday to residents in towns and villages in southern Lebanon, including areas beyond its current zone of occupation, despite an ongoing ceasefire with the militant group Hezbollah.

“For your safety, you must evacuate your homes immediately and move away from the villages and towns by at least 1,000m into open areas,” Israel Military’s Arabic-language spokesman Avichay Adraee posted on X.

The warning covers more than 10 villages and towns, including several in the district of Nabatieh that lie north of the Litani River, beyond the “security zone” that Israel established inside Lebanese territory and formalised in the ceasefire.

Lebanon’s state-run National News Agency reported heavy shelling and blasts in several regions, including those not mentioned in Israel’s evacuation orders, such as the towns of Jmeijmeh, Yater, and Kafra in the Bint Jbeil district this afternoon, Houla and Tallousa in the Marjeyoun district, Srifa in the district of Tyre, and the Kafa’at area of Beirut’s southern suburbs.

At least five people were killed in various strikes, while several people were injured, including four paramedics, it stated. *—Agencies*

Kuwait exports no oil in April, 1st in 30yrs

KUWAIT CITY, 3 MAY

Kuwait did not export any crude oil during April, marking the first time in over three decades that the Gulf producer has recorded zero monthly crude exports, according to maritime oil analytics site TankerTrackers. The last time this happened was during the 1991 Gulf War. TankerTrackers added that “Kuwait still produces oil which it then takes partly into storage and partly into refined products; some of which has been exported.”

OPEC BOOSTS OIL CAP

Seven OPEC+ countries have decided to increase their oil production cap by 188,000 barrels per day in June, in response to the withdrawal of the United Arab Emirates from the bloc, OPEC said in a statement on Sunday.

The countries are Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Algeria and Oman. *—ANI*

Nick Stewart joins Iran negotiation team

The White House said that Nick Stewart was appointed as an adviser on the diplomatic team tasked with negotiation with Iran. Stewart’s induction was facilitated by Trump’s son-in-law Jared Kushner, and will join the team led by envoy Steve Witkoff. Stewart has been associated with the lobbying division of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, that has advocated for a more aggressive military posture against Tehran.

China issues injunction to block US sanctions

The Chinese government has issued a formal injunction to block US sanctions directed at five domestic refiners, including the Hengli Petrochemical Refinery, accused of purchasing Iranian oil. The Ministry of Commerce said the sanctions restrict business between Chinese enterprises and third countries “in violation of international law”. The sanctions last month seek to penalise entities doing business with the firms.

Israel has continued to bombard Gaza despite the US-brokered ceasefire in October *—ANI*

Israel mulls resuming Gaza war

TEL AVIV, 3 MAY

Israel’s Security Cabinet was set to meet om Sunday to consider resuming military operations in Gaza, amid reports that Hamas is failing to comply with ceasefire disarmament terms, multiple Israeli publications quoted officials as saying.

Israeli official told the Israeli Broadcasting Authority that the cabinet will assess whether the current situation warrants a return to fighting to meet government objectives.

The deliberations follow assessments that Palestinian resistance movements have not adhered to arms reduction protocols outlined in the October ceasefire agreement.

Meanwhile, Israel has approved a multibillion-dollar deal to purchase two new combat squadrons of advanced F-35 and F-15IA fighter jets from Lockheed Martin and Boeing, as part of a 350-billion-shekel programme to bolster its armed forces.

Defence Ministry Director General Amir Baram emphasised the importance of maintaining military superiority.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that, “our pilots are prepared to reach anywhere in Iranian airspace if required.” *—Agencies*

Ukraine says it hit Russian shadow fleet vessels

KYIV, 3 MAY

Ukraine struck two vessels part of the Russian “shadow fleet” near the port of Novorossiysk on the Black Sea, stated President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Sunday.

“These tankers were actively used to transport oil. Now they won’t be,” Zelensky wrote on X, publishing purported footage of the attack.

Zelenskyy also stated that Ukraine struck a Karakurt-class missile ship was hit, along with a patrol boat and another tanker from the shadow oil fleet near Primorsk.

The “shadow fleet” refers to ships that use deceptive tactics to bypass Western sanctions. Novorossiysk has also become a hub for the Russian Black Sea Fleet after repeated Ukrainian strikes on occupied Crimea.

Russia did not immediately comment. *—Agencies*

Nepal govt scraps 1,500 ‘politically motivated’ appointments

KATHMANDU, 3 MAY

Nepal’s new government has cancelled more than 1,500 major what it being termed as politically motivated public appointments made by previous governments through a sweeping ordinance issued by President Ramchandra Paudel.

According to the local media, these appointments were made before 26 March - the date marking leadership change in the country.

President Ramchandra Paudel on Saturday issued the ‘Ordinance on Special Provisions for the Removal of Public Office Bearers, 2083’ on the recommendation of the council of ministers, triggering widespread disruptions across Nepal’s administrative, health and education sectors, according to The Kathmandu Post newspaper.

- It is not uncommon in Nepal for incoming governments to review decisions made by their predecessors. However, the scale appears wider than usual, and critics warn it could hurt the functioning of bodies

It is not uncommon in Nepal for incoming governments to review decisions made by their predecessors, especially appointments to influential public posts. However, the scale of the current move appears wider than usual.

The move has drawn criticism from some who warn it could disrupt the functioning of public bodies, while government officials say it was needed to improve transparency and accountability.

The ordinance led to the dismissal of 1,594 “politically-appointed” office bearers across a wide range of sectors, leaving their positions vacant.

The provision mandates that all appointments made prior to 26 March are automatically terminated, regardless of tenure, benefits or terms of appointment. *—PTI*

EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL LIFE?

Trump hints at what’s to come in a new batch of ‘UFO files’

An unidentified aircraft seen in a GOFAST video released by the Pentagon *—DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE*

NEW YORK, 3 MAY

US President Donald Trump says the Pentagon is preparing to release some “very interesting” UFO files uncovered by his administration, generating a mix of buzz and scepticism as he hints at new revelations about alien life.

“We’re going to be releasing a lot of things that we haven’t,” Trump said on Wednesday at a White House event celebrating NASA astronauts. In the buildup to that release, Trump said “The American people deserve transparency and truth.”

- US President Donald Trump has said that people will be suprised by what is releaced in the soon-to-be released ‘UFO files’

“The first releases will begin very, very soon,” Trump told supporters in April at a Turning Point USA event. “So you can go out and see if that phenomenon is correct.”

Trump has relished portraying himself as the president who reveals secrets. In his first week back in office, he ordered the release of records related to the assassinations of former president John F Kennedy, Senator Robert F Kennedy and former activist Martin Luther King Jr The disclosures revealed little beyond what was already known.

Trump first stoked interest in extraterrestrials in February by ordering agencies to release UFO records, then built suspense with hints of an imminent cache of previously undisclosed documents. His February directive on social media called for transparency around “alien and extraterrestrial life, unidentified aerial phenomena (UAP), and unidentified flying objects (UFOs).”

Even before Trump’s directive, the Pentagon was years into a process to declassify government documents related to UFOs. That agency, the All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office, is now working with the White House to release “never-before-seen UAP information,” the Pentagon stated. *—PTI*

—INSTAGRAM

Bloomsbury, Say Again Press tie up for non-fiction

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

Publishing house Bloomsbury India has announced a partnership with Say Again Press to launch a new publishing imprint aimed at delivering high-quality, accessible content. It will begin with non-fiction titles across genres such as sports, health, autobiography and business. The imprint will also introduce the 'Say Again Essentials' series, positioned as concise, practical reads for contemporary professionals and leaders. The 'Say Again Essentials' series will feature titles such as 'Lead Yourself' and 'Be Heard', offering leadership insights from voices including Shereen Bhan, Amit Varma, Raj Mariwala. It will also include works by authors Devika Rangachari, Vivek Law, Anu Singh and Dr Shubham Pant, among others. —*PTI*

'High crude rate: Aviation faces margin squeeze & demand risk'

Analyst says airlines have moved to 'adjustment phase' after weeks of war

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

If the crude oil prices stay elevated, losses will become harder to absorb as Indian aviation is more sensitive, stated Sparta Commodities Senior Oil Analyst Abhishek Kumar.

In an exclusive conversation with ANI, he said, "If the fuel shock stays elevated, the risk is that losses become harder to absorb, flights are cancelled, and government intervention may be needed to protect connectivity and prevent deeper stress across the sector."

Kumar explained that India's aviation sector is particularly vulnerable because aviation turbine fuel (ATF) already forms a large part of operating costs and the market is highly price-sensitive. Airlines may increase fares on some routes, but they cannot fully pass on higher fuel costs without hurting demand.

He added that the impact is already visible, with airlines reducing discounts, increasing fares and reviewing weaker routes, along with a

—PTI

Leisure travel, budget flyers and weaker domestic routes are likely to be impacted first

rising risk of capacity cuts. The industry has also started seeking policy support, including relief on ATF pricing and taxes.

"The aviation fuel surge is now a direct margin shock for airlines. The issue is not only higher crude, but that jet fuel has risen faster than crude, making the ATF cost squeeze much sharper," he said.

Brent crude is currently trading around USD 109 per barrel, jet fuel prices have risen faster.

"After several weeks of elevated prices and war-related disruption, airlines have moved from the absorption phase to the adjustment phase," he said.

He also warned about demand risks. "The next risk is demand destruction. Airlines can pass on part of the fuel cost, but not endlessly. If fares rise too quickly, price-sensitive passengers start delaying or cancelling trips," he added. Meanwhile, the government has reduced export duties on petroleum products for the fortnight beginning 1 May. —*PTI*

HIGHER OPERATIONAL COST

Indian airlines fuel cost is now **55-60 per cent** of operation cost, as compared to **30-40 per cent** before war, Federation of Indian Airlines says.

Unilever to piggyride slack market competition

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

Disruptions in the global supply chain and a surge in packaging costs due to rising crude oil prices have led to a shortage of local competition in markets like India, and it may support Unilever's volume growth in categories such as home care, said Chief Executive Officer Fernando Fernández.

"We are seeing some shortage in some local players, particularly in India and Southeast Asia, that can support our volumes, and it will make easier the passing of pricing in the future," said Fernández of the British multinational consumer goods maker.

In Q1/2026, the British consumer goods major achieved its highest-ever share in laundry powders in the Indian market, and is also 'sharply' increasing its position in the fast-growing liquid detergent segment.

India is consistently ranked as Unilever's second-largest market globally by revenue, after the United States, with around 12-14 per cent contribution to its total sales. Its local unit Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) reported a 6 per cent volume growth in the March quarter. —*PTI*

Foreigners sold Rs 60,847 cr equities

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) continued to pull out money from Indian equity markets in April, selling shares worth Rs 60,847 crore, marking the second consecutive month of heavy outflows, according to data from National Securities Depository Limited.

In March, FPIs had sold equities worth Rs 1,17,775 crore, which was the highest monthly outflow recorded in 2026 so far.

With this, the total FPI outflows from Indian equities in 2026 have reached Rs 1,91,969 crore, reflecting sustained pressure on domestic markets amid global shifts in capital allocation.

Commenting on the trend, VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments, said that a major factor behind the outflows is the increasing attraction of other Asian markets, particularly those benefiting from the ongoing artificial intelligence (AI) investment cycle.

—FREEPIK

"An important factor driving capital flows is the AI trade, particularly in South Korea and Taiwan," he said.

He added that countries such as Japan, South Korea and Taiwan are witnessing significant inflows, while India and some other emerging markets are facing outflows due to challenges such as the ongoing energy crisis and currency depreciation.

According to him, a few large companies are drawing a major share of global investments.

"Two companies in South Korea - Samsung and SK Hynix - and one in Taiwan - TSMC - are attracting the lion's share of these inflows," he added. —*ANI*

Govt to boost coal gasification with Rs 37,500 cr scheme

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

The Cabinet is likely to approve soon a Rs 37,500 crore incentive scheme to promote coal gasification projects, aimed at boosting clean energy production and reducing import dependence, sources said.

The coal ministry has already prepared a Cabinet note on the scheme to promote coal gasification projects, with a financial outlay of Rs 37,500 crore, they said.

The proposed scheme is aimed at accelerating surface coal and lignite gasification projects across the country, promoting self-reliance by reducing import dependence on critical commodities such as LNG, urea, ammonium nitrate, ammonia, coking coal via DRI, methanol and DME, while enabling enhanced utilisation of domestic coal and lignite resources for fuels and chemicals production, and supporting the national target of 100 million tonnes coal gasification capacity by 2030. This is a unified scheme with no categories, and the maximum financial assistance for a single project is Rs 3,000 crore, they said.

—PIXABAY

According to an industry analyst, the government's renewed push for coal gasification comes in the wake of recent West Asia tensions that have exposed the country's vulnerability to disruptions in LNG, LPG and other hydrocarbon supplies, underscoring the need to diversify energy feedstock sources. The government is now positioning coal gasification as a strategic lever to convert domestic coal into fuels and chemicals, reduce import dependence, and strengthen energy security at a time when global supply chains remain fragile.

India has one of the largest coal reserves of 401 billion tonnes, uniquely positioning it to leverage domestic resources for reducing the dependence on imports and building a clean, resilient energy economy. —*PTI*

Mcap top firms rises by Rs 2.20 lakh cr, Reliance leads

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

The combined market capitalisation of four of the top-10 most valued Indian firms increased by Rs 2.20 lakh crore last week, with Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest winner, data showed. The BSE Sensex gained 249.29 points, or 0.32 per cent, amid a week characterised by volatility and range-bound trading, influenced by mixed global and domestic cues.

Ajit Mishra, SVP of Research at Religare Broking Ltd, said that markets ended the week with marginal gains, supported initially by easing geopolitical tensions and steady Q4 earnings. However, rising crude oil prices, weak Asian market signals, and persistent FII outflows limited gains.

Reliance Industries added Rs 1,39,655.8 crore to its valuation, reaching Rs 19,36,303.30 crore. Bharti Airtel's market cap rose Rs 43,503.51 crore to Rs 11,49,222.13 crore. TCS increased Rs 27,569.83 crore to Rs 8,94,933.95 crore, while Bajaj Finance gained Rs 9,432.32 crore to Rs 5,83,123.13 crore.

ICICI Bank's mcap fell Rs 45,364.62 crore to Rs 9,04,980.78 crore, and State Bank of India's declined Rs 30,922.57 crore to Rs 9,85,829.96 crore. HDFC Bank's valuation dropped Rs 20,951.31 crore to Rs 11,87,274.17 crore, and Hindustan Unilever's slipped Rs 18,420.79 crore to Rs 5,28,799.01 crore.

LIC's valuation decreased Rs 8,222.49 crore to Rs 5,04,798.07 crore, while Larsen & Toubro's declined Rs 178.83 crore to Rs 5,51,993.05 crore. —*PTI*

End-of-life-vehicle rule may cost auto industry Rs 25,000 crore

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

The Indian automobile industry is staring at a hit of about Rs 25,000 crore on bottom line for FY26 with the Environment Protection (End-of-Life Vehicles) Rules 2025 triggering an accounting standard clause that requires automakers to make budgetary provision for environmental compensation for vehicles sold in the past.

According to industry executives, an 'innocuous looking' clause in the Environment Protection (End-of-Life Vehicle) Rules, 2025 notified by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, in January 2025 has spooked automakers after their auditors flagged the magnitude of its ramifications.

"This rule (Rule 4 (6)) triggers accounting standard IND AS 37, ' Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets', which means automakers will have to make substantial financial provisions for the cost of EPR certificates for all vehicles sold over the past 20 years for private, and 15 years for commercial,' an industry executive on the condition of anonymity said.

It is understood that industry body Society of Indian Automobile Industry had also taken up the matter with the ministry, highlighting the financial impact on the bottom line of automakers due to the environmental compensation under IND AS 37.

The auto industry body had sought the possibility of resolving the issue through amending Rule 4(6) before EC cost notification to clarify that cumulative budgetary provisioning may not be required.

However, the ministry in its amendment notification to the Environment Protection (End-of-Life Vehicle) Rules, 2025 on March 27, 2026 did not alter the specific clause. It makes a huge dent on the auto industry's bottom line wiping off Rs 25,000 crore from profits, said one of the executives. —*PTI*

TO CHECK CYBER THREATS

Public sector banks to spend on IT amid concerns over Mythos

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

Public sector banks are bracing up to increase IT spending in order to secure their systems, safeguard customer data, and protect monetary resources amid global concerns over Anthropic's Claude Mythos AI tool and its potential implications for financial data security.

Given the challenge of Mythos' advanced coding capabilities which give it unprecedented potential to detect cybersecurity weaknesses and develop methods to exploit them, banks are expected to increase their investments in IT to make their system more robust and reduce vulnerabilities with regard to cyber attacks, Punjab & Sind Bank MD and CEO Swarup Kumar Saha said.

This assumes significance in view of Finance Mini ster Nirmala Sitharaman urging banks to take all necessary pre-emptive measures to secure their IT systems after Mythos exhibited its capability to find weaknesses in their operating system and launch a potential cyber attack.

"Banks in India are now entering a phase where they have to see IT spend from a 'cost of running' to a 'cost of surviving' spend. Frontier AI systems, especially the unreleased models like Anthropic's Claude Mythos, do not create a new category of risk; they collapse the timelines of every existing one," said Srinivas L, Joint MD & Joint CEO, 63SATS Cybertech Limited, a subsidiary of 63 moons technologies limited. —*PTI*

AMID WEST ASIA WAR

Leather, footwear firms seek duty exemption

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

The leather and footwear sector has appealed for duty exemptions on several critical inputs, including synthetic leather, metal accessories, machinery, threads, moulds, and certain chemicals, as the ongoing Middle East crisis has driven input costs up by as much as 60 per cent, an official stated.

The industry recently brought this issue to the attention of the commerce and industry ministry. An official explained that exporters have recommended the early implementation of the proposed FLOAT (Footwear and Leather Oriented Transformation) scheme, which covers the entire product range, raw materials, machinery, and inputs. They have also urged for duty-free imports of crust and finished leathers to support domestic manufacturing.

—FREEPIK

"The industry is facing a sharp increase in raw material and input costs—rising by 40-60 per cent—due to the Middle East crisis. In view of this, we have urged the government to provide import duty exemptions on critical inputs such as synthetic leather (PU-coated fabrics), footwear components, metal accessories, leather and footwear machinery, threads, moulds, toe puffs, eyelets, certain leather chemicals, and packaging materials," the official said.

Certain rubber chemicals, PU leather, adhesives, plastics, and shoe soles, which are derived from petroleum products, have been affected due to the crisis, especially as the closure of the Strait of Hormuz by Iran has impacted the movement of oil and gas. Inputs imported from countries like China, Korea, Indonesia, and Japan have seen disruptions; the sector's imports dipped 4.49 per cent year-on-year to $938 million.

In 2025-26, India's leather and leather products exports declined 2.36 per cent year-on-year to USD 4.26 billion. Industry sources expect exports to reach USD 5.6 billion with the inclusion of non-leather goods, whose data is awaited. Exports from the sector stood at USD 5.57 billion in 2024-25, up from USD 5.38 billion in 2023-24 and USD 6 billion in 2022-23. —*PTI*

PLATFORMS ROLL OUT MEASURES TO PROTECT DELIVERY WORKERS FROM HEAT

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

As India experiences intense heatwaves with temperatures soaring above 40°C, gig economy platforms are stepping up efforts to safeguard their delivery workforce. Delivery partners on two-wheelers face increased risks of dehydration, and heatstroke, especially during peak afternoon hours.

Amazon's 'Project Ashray' has established 100 air-conditioned rest stops in major cities offering seating, washrooms, charging stations, and first aid. Amazon states that these facilities serve over 1,50,000 partners monthly, including those outside its network, and organise free health check-ups with doctors advising on hydration and early signs of heat-related illnesses.

Zomato has partnered with restaurant chains, TVS, and Shell to create over 5,000 shaded rest points with waterIts delivery partners are covered under health insurance, including OPD, hospitalisation, and day care.

Zepto is upgrading dark stores with air coolers and heat-reflective roofs.

Wearable cooling gear is also being introduced; Zomato and Blinkit have launched cooling vests, while Swiggy's jackets utilise evaporative cooling technology to reduce body temperature by 6-7°C. Zomato offers subsidised sunscreen jackets, and companies are distributing summer kits with ORS and electrolyte powders.

Flipkart and Blinkit activated doctor on call services for employees and families. —*PTI*

Vinesh flags fear of bias; WFI assures safety

Says govt will be responsible for any incident in Gonda

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president Sanjay Singh on Sunday asserted that the venue for the National Open Ranking Tournament in Gonda will not be changed and offered a "personal guarantee" for Vinesh Phogat's safety after the decorated wrestler warned that the government would be responsible for any untoward incident and raised concerns over possible biased officiating in her comeback event.

In a video message ahead of her comeback after nearly 18 months, Phogat alleged that the competition, slated to be held at a venue linked to former WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, could see results influenced by individuals close to him.

"If Vinesh is worried about her safety, let me assure her that I am taking personal guarantee of that. Also, we have UWW-approved referees who officiate and all trial bouts are recorded, so there is no chance of any bias," Sanjay Singh told PTI.

"And let me add that this is an Open tournament, which is not mandatory.

The choice is hers to compete. We are not going to change the venue," Singh said.

The National Open Ranking tournament is scheduled to be held from May 10-12.

The tournament will open with the men's freestyle trials and will be followed by Greco-Roman (May 11) and women's events (May 12).

Vinesh, who has entered the competition in the 57kg weight class, earlier during the day voiced her concerns.

"If any untoward incident happens to me, my team or supporters during the competition, the Indian government will be responsible," Vinesh said and urged the media and the sporting community to be present at the venue to ensure transparency.

Wrestling Federation of India President Sanjay Singh with former WFI president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh during a press conferencet -PTI

"The tournament is being organised at a place where his (Brij Bhushan's) influence is strong. Who will officiate which bout, how many points will be awarded, who will sit as mat chairman, everything can be controlled by him and his people," she further added.

According to sources, about 1400 wrestlers have registered for the tournament.

"Do you think it is fair to change the venue and disturb the whole schedule when about 1400 wrestlers have entered the tournament and made their travel and stay arrangements. Why WFI should do it and put participating wrestlers to inconvenience," said a WFI official.

The 31-year-old Vinesh, who quit the sport after her Paris Games disqualification and resumed training in recent months, said she wants to return to the mat "honestly" and win medals for the country again, but expressed doubts over a level playing field.

"I don't want any privilege or special treatment. I only want the results to reflect the hard work of athletes on the mat," she said.

It may be mentioned that Vinesh is now a politician, having won the Haryana state assembly elections from the Julana constituency on a Congress ticket in October 2024.

Vinesh also voiced concern over the mental pressure of competing in an environment she described as hostile, particularly given her role as one of the complainants in an ongoing sexual harassment case against Singh. —PTI

Hardik, SKY in focus as MI take on LSG in IPL

Pandya has been on and off in terms of execution

MUMBAI, 3 MAY

Struggling former champions Mumbai Indians will hope their embattled stars Hardik Pandya and Suryakumar Yadav come good in a clash against bottom-ranked Lucknow Super Giants, even though the chances of qualifying for the play-offs in this edition of IPL have evaporated for good.

Pandya (146 runs and 4 wickets) and Suryakumar (186) have had forgettable campaigns so far, which has hampered MI's journey, more so in the absence of former skipper Rohit Sharma, who remains on a comeback trail after a hamstring injury earlier this season.

Only two wins in nine matches have consigned the five-time IPL winners, the Mumbai Indians, to the penultimate spot in the points table.

While their hopes to remain in contention for the IPL playoffs are all but over, there remains an outside chance of qualification.

But before all that, MI will have to have their Indian stars doing the heavy lifting, which has not been the case so far. Pandya's leadership has come into focus as MI has endured a tough campaign. Tactically, he has been way off the mark. The batters have collectively misfired, and so have their bowlers, but in between have been Pandya's ordinary performances both with the bat and the ball, combined with certain calls on the field which did not yield desired results.

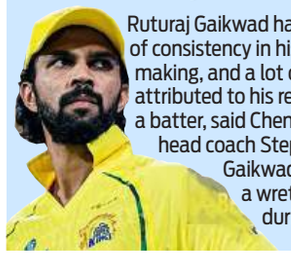
MI VS LSG @ Wankhede Stadium
Match starts at
7.30 pm IST

With the ball, Pandya has been on and off in terms of execution, but his batting leaves a lot to be desired, especially when he carries a lot of responsibility in that heavily depleted lower order from the past. Suryakumar has not been able to convert starts while being caught off his trademark strokes, which has indeed been a growing concern as he no longer dominates bowling like he used to.

The Indian expected to take off, as ordinary batting could not be masked by a strong showing by their bowlers collectively. Even in their last game, Mohsin Khan's 5/23 for the best bowling figures in the tournament were undone by LSG's erroneous call to send a struggling Nicholas Pooran in the Super Over. Skipper Rishabh Pant finds himself at a crossroads with questions being posed about his white-ball game in general.

The maverick Indian wicketkeeper-batter, too, will face the challenge of turning it around for his side as LSG head into a busy week of having three crucial games in a span of seven days. —PTI

Ruturaj's batting form is also helping his captaincy: Fleming



Ruturaj Gaikwad has shown a lot of consistency in his decision-making, and a lot of it could be attributed to his return to form as a batter, said Chennai Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming. Gaikwad, who has had a wretched run during the first half of IPL, has now scored 74 not out and 67 not out in the last two games, and CSK have won three out of their last five games to remain in the sixth position in the points table. "Yeah, he's getting better each game. It was a bit of a slow start as we were trying to form the bowling patterns at different grounds as we played away for the first couple of games. But the last few games he's been excellent," Fleming said after CSK beat Mumbai Indians by eight wickets on Saturday. CSK's coach for the past 18 seasons also felt that Gaikwad's good show with the bat has also helped him gain confidence as a captain.

-PTI

Manas Dhamne ends as runner-up in Shymkent

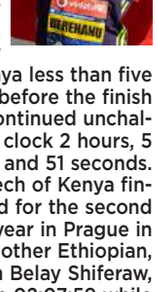
SHYMKENT, 3 MAY

India's teenage sensation Manas Dhamne fell short of a title finish in his maiden ATP Challenger singles final, going down to Belgium's Buvaysar Gadamauri in a closely-fought summit clash in Shymkent, Kazakhstan, on Sunday.The 18-year-old Dhamne put up a spirited fight before losing 6-7(8), 4-6 in a contest that lasted over two hours and hinged on fine margins.Dhamne showed nerves of steel in the opening set, stretching his more experienced opponent to a tie-break and even holding set points before Gadamauri edged ahead 10-8.The narrow loss appeared to take some wind out of the Indian's sails as the Belgian capitalised with a decisive break in the second set to seal the title.—*PTI*

Tsegu claims victory in Prague Int'l Marathon

PRAGUE, 3 MAY

Berehanu Tsegu of Ethiopia won the 31st edition of the Prague International Marathon on Sunday, while Millicent Jelimo won the women's race. Tsegu pulled away from Justus Kipkorir Limo of Kenya less than five kilometers before the finish line and continued unchallenged to clock 2 hours, 5 minutes, and 51 seconds. Felix Kipkoech of Kenya finished second for the second straight year in Prague in 2:07:45. Another Ethiopian, Andualem Belay Shiferaw, was third in 02:07:59 while Limo dropped to fourth. Jelimo claimed her victory in 2:24:19.—*PTI*



Chess: Arjun Erigaisi draws with Yagiz Erdogmus

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

A win at the TePe Sigeman & Co 2026 eluded Arjun Erigaisi as he played out draws in consecutive rounds, with the last one coming against Yagiz Kaan Erdogmus on Sunday.

The contest lasted 78 moves of a Ruy Lopez, where both Erdogmus and Erigaisi stood better at one stage or another. The Indian grandmaster was winning in a Queen endgame, but only drew.

The result saw Erigaisi fall to fourth in the standings after the second round, while Magnus Carlsen, his previous opponent, joined the leaders Nodirbek Abdusattorov and Andy Woodward after beating Nils Grandelius.

In Carlsen's return to classical chess after almost a year, Erigaisi held the Norwegian to a draw in the opening round. But in the next challenge, the World No. 1 refused to give any space to Grandelius, ending up as the only winner in this round. —PTI

-PTI

Raghuvanshi, Chakaravarthy help KKR beat Hyderabad

HYDERABAD, 3 MAY

The promising Angkrish Raghuvanshi (59) made a well-paced fifty as Kolkata Knight Riders defeated Sunrisers Hyderabad by seven wickets in their IPL match here on Sunday.

Mystery spinners Varun Chakravarthy (3/36) and Sunil Narine (2/31) wrecked the SRH middle-order with controlled spells.

Skipper Ajinkya Rahane (43) and Raghuvanshi added 84 runs for the second wicket as KKR overhauled SRH's under-par 165 all out with ease.

Finn Allen made an aggressive 29 off 13 balls upfront to give KKR a brisk start.

Earlier, Travis Head made a belligerent 61 off 28 balls, but KKR's spinners bowled well to restrict SRH to 165.

Mystery spinners Varun Chakravarthy (3/36) and Sunil Narine (2/31) wrecked the SRH middle-order with controlled spells.

Along the way of his two-wicket burst in his fourth over, Narine also completed 200 IPL wickets.

The spinner was the third bowler to achieve the feat after Yuzvendra Chahal and Bhuvneshwar Kumar. —PTI

INDIAN TEAM BREAKS NATIONAL RECORD IN 4X100M MIXED RELAY

NEW DELHI, 3 MAY

The Indian team broke the 4x100m mixed relay National Record at the ongoing World Athletics Relays 2026 during the event's heats on Sunday.

The quartet of Ragul Kumar, Nithya Gandhe, Animesh Kujur, and Sneha SS clocked 41.35s to better the previous record, which stood at 42.30s, which was set by Lalu Prasad, Unnathi Aiyappa, Harita Bhadra and Jayaram D during the Open Relay tournament in Chandigarh in March.

While the National Record was rewritten, the timing wasn't enough to book the Indians a spot in the final as they finished sixth in their heat and 10th overall. —PTI

Barcelona wins at Osasuna and is on the cusp of La Liga title

BARCELONA, 3 MAY

Robert Lewandowski and Ferran Torres scored late in Barcelona's 2-1 win at Osasuna on Saturday that set up a chance for Hansi Flick's side to be crowned Spanish league champions this weekend.

Barcelona opened a 14-point gap over Real Madrid with four rounds left after this weekend. Madrid must win at Espanyol on Sunday to stop Barcelona from clinching a second straight La Liga crown.

A victory by Madrid would prolong the title fight another week, when Barcelona hosts Madrid in a "clasico" match.

Substitute Marcus Rashford picked out a run by Lewandowski and placed a cross for the striker to thump in with a powerful header in the 81st minute. That sparked a flurry of goals in the final minutes. Torres added a second goal five minutes later, and Raúl García headed in one for Osasuna in the 89th.

Atletico Madrid rested most of its starters but got goals from two debutants as it won 2-0 at Valencia before it faces Arsenal for a place in the Champions League final.

Julián Álvarez, Alexander Sorloth, and Giuliano Simeone, who all finished Wednesday's 1-1 draw with Arsenal with niggles. —PTI

Barcelona's Robert Lewandowski celebrates after scoring his side's opening goal –x/@Barcelona

-PTI

Diksha Dagar is in contention in Mauritius

PORT LOUIS, 3 MAY

Indian golfer Diksha Dagar played a solid bogey-free 3-under 69 to move into title contention at the MCB Ladies Classic - Mauritius on the Ladies European Tour here.

The two-time winner on the LET, Diksha, shot 68 in the first round and moved to 7-under for two rounds. She is Tied-fourth and just two behind the co-leaders, Denmark's Smilla Tarning Soenderby, Germany's Celina Sattelkau and South Africa's Casandra Alexander. They were all at a total of nine-under-par.

Three of the four Indians in the field this week made the cut. Joining Diksha for the final round were Hitaashee Bakshi (71-69) and Tvesa Malik (70-71). Hitaashee was T-19 and Tvesa was T-26. Vani Kapoor (78-77) missed the cut. Diksha, who was T-37 in the Women's South African Open last week, is looking to peak in time for her Hero Women's Indian Open. She birdied the sixth, 10th and 12th and dropped no bogeys. Hitaashee had five birdies, including three in a row from the third, but also dropped shots on the 12th and the 13th. —PTI

'DECISION IS MINE'

Bruzon to leave East Bengal at end of season

KOLKATA, 3 APRIL

East Bengal head coach Oscar Bruzon will leave the club at the end of the ongoing Indian Super League (ISL) 2025-26 season, the Spaniard announced on Sunday.

"I want to announce that it is my decision not to continue in East Bengal when we finish the season on the 31st of May," Bruzon said during the pre-match press conference ahead of the clash against Mumbai City on Tuesday.

"The decision is mine. It is not related to economics. It is not related to the uncertainty of Indian football. It is not related to the club management, wanting or not wanting me to continue. It is not related to the position that we are going to finish in the ISL," he said.

Bruzon joined the club in October 2024, succeeding Carles Cuadrat. He previously worked as Mumbai City's assistant manager to Nicolas Anelka in 2015.

He has taken charge of 43 games for East Bengal in all competitions, recording 21 wins, 10 draws, and 12 losses.

Speaking on the timing of his announcement, the 48-year-old said, "Because unfortunately, here there are a lot of narratives, a lot of agendas. Everybody twists everything, everybody manipulates, and wants to be in control of the narrative. And the narrative here is only one. It's my decision."

On the ongoing season, where the Red and Gold Brigade sit three points off the leader, Jamshedpur FC, despite having played two games less, the Spaniard said, From February 2025, we started planning for this season. I was involved with the technical matters while Emami's Vibhash Agarwal looked into the economics of it. We have been working very hard to understand the situation of the club, analysing and scouting the best possible players. Many people are trying to take credit for it, but the reality is, Vibhash and I are responsible for what has happened this season. —PTI